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# Lex Orendi, Lex Missio: Nurturing Missional Praxis through Eucharistic Liturgical Formation

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# Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

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*LEX ORENDI, LEX MISSIO*: NURTURING MISSIONAL PRAXIS
THROUGH EUCHARISTIC LITURGICAL FORMATION

Written by

WILLIAM H. ALLPORT, II

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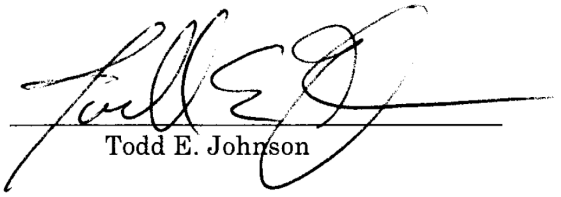

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# *LEX ORENDI, LEX MISSIO*: NURTURING MISSIONAL PRAXIS THROUGH EUCHARISTIC LITURGICAL FORMATION

A MINISTRY FOCUS PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
WILLIAM H. ALLPORT, II
OCTOBER 2015

ABSTRACT

***LEX ORENDI, LEX MISSIO*: NURTURING MISSIONAL PRAXIS THROUGH EUCHARISTIC LITURGICAL FORMATION**

William H. Allport, II
Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
2015

Without a clear expression from the *theologia prima* of the Episcopal Church's eucharistic liturgical practice, mission praxis remains a tangential programmatic expression and not the very shape of the life of the Church. When rooted in *theologia prima* of eucharistic liturgical practice, missional praxis transforms the ecclesiology of the Church. This project provides a strategy to set the theological source for missional ecclesiology from the expression and formative realities of eucharistic liturgical practice.

The purpose of this project is to pilot a congregational lay leader formation program. This program connects the principles of liturgical formation for Mission inherent to the eucharistic liturgy theology expressed in the practice of the Episcopal Church. By providing a basis for missional praxis from eucharistic liturgical practice, Episcopal congregations will discover the foundation for authentic and sustainable missional ecclesiology.

Part One describes the context for project implementation. The Introduction articulates the process of Anglican theological reflection and definition of key terms. Chapter One presents the specific congregational and judicatory context illustrating the challenge of reconciling contemporary missional theology with Anglican ecclesiology and limitations of a liturgical locus for missional praxis.

Part Two establishes the project's theological foundations, beginning with a review and reflection upon texts with consideration of anthropology, ecclesiology, phenomenology, and Anglican missional study. Biblical exegesis and theological analysis illustrates the inherent missionality of eucharistic practice. This section demonstrates the theological correlates of liturgical formation for missonal praxis and development of missional ecclesiology.

Part Three describes the implementation of a pilot project, identifying a specific timeframe, research scale, project goals, content, leadership, target population, and logistics. This section emphasizes the combination of formation through action-reflection learning within a community of practice. This section provides an assessment of the project, including recommendations for improving and augmenting the ministry.

Content Reader: Todd E. Johnson, PhD

Words: 292

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Carrie, Abigail, and Maggie

To my bishops, Mike, Dick, Bob, Gary, David and Mark
To my brothers from another mother, Mike and Tom
To my ohana of St. Peter's
To my family of St. Paul's
To our loving companions of Reconciliation

*Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνείᾳ ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος, ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν, πεποιθὼς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ· καθώς ἐστιν δίκαιον ἐμοὶ τοῦτο φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς, ἔν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου συγκοινωνούς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας· μάρτυς γάρ μου ὁ θεός, ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει, εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, πεπληρωμένοι καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ.*

*ΠΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΗΣΙΟΥΣ 1:3-11*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# PART ONE: MISSIONAL CHALLENGE AND CONTEXT

# INTRODUCTION

The people of the Episcopal Church of Reconciliation[1] strives to act and exist in different way. Stepping out of an internally-focused enclave existence, the church developed new programs and organizational strategies with explicit external focus. The congregation seeks a new identity and substance which embraces the centrality of the mission of God for the life of the congregation, identifying with the "missional church movement." However, this transformation remains halting as the locus for transformation resides in program or marketing development. For Reconciliation, and similarly aspiring congregations, it is time for "missional" to express the heart of the Church within the mission of God. The Tin Woodman wisely told his companions, "'You people with hearts,' he said once, 'have something to guide you, and need never do wrong; but I have no heart, and so I must be very careful.'"[2] The Tin Woodman discovered his heart on the journey to Oz. The Church discovers the heart of God, and therefore what it means to be the Church, through the *theologia prima* of the eucharist. As stated by the Ante-Nicean writer Irenaeus of Lyon, "Our teaching is in harmony with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist establishes our teaching."[3] Therefore, based upon the formative realities of the eucharist, this project seeks to provide the means for Reconciliation to cultivate a new way of identifying and actualizing the life of the Church which is shaped for mission,

[1] For the remainder of this work, The Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio, TX, will be identified as "Reconciliation."

[2] Frank L. Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Salt Lake City: Project Gutenberg, 2013), Project Gutenberg Kindle eBook.

[3] Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies,* http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book4.html, 4.18.5.

missional praxis. As the congregation seeks a new expression that embodies the authenticity of the call of the Church by Christ and the particularity of the Anglican theological tradition, this work will set the theological source for missional ecclesiology from the expression and formative realities of eucharistic liturgical practice.

Reconciliation recognizes that the changing culture, surrounding community, and social environment call the congregation "to do church in a different way."[4] The congregation's efforts have initiated programs and community partnerships in solidarity with the missional church movement.[5] While contemporary works provide profuse articulations of "missional church," theologian David Gruber offers a thorough summary:

> Mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation. "Mission" means "sending," and it is the central biblical theme describing [what] the purpose is of God's actions in human history. God's mission began with the call of Israel to receive God's blessings in order to be a blessing to the nations. God's mission unfolded in the history of God's people across the centuries recorded in Scripture, and it reached its revelatory climax in the incarnation of God's work of salvation in Jesus ministering, crucified, and resurrected. God's mission continued in the sending of the Spirit to call and empower the church as the witness to God's good news in Jesus Christ.[6]

The congregation seeks a transformation that strikes deeper than programmatic tinkering that is short-lived and inconsequential to the identity, character, and nature of the church. For this reason, Anglican theologian Paul Avis' working definition of the mission of the Church provides a near slogan to define the transformation sought by Reconcilation:

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[4] *Visioning and Strategic Plan, Welcoming Campus Report, Final* (San Antonio, TX: Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, September 2011), 2.

[5] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Books, 2011), 46.

[6] Darrell Guder, "Missional Church: From Sending to Being Sent" in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's, 1998), 4.

"Mission is the whole Church bringing the whole Christ to the whole world."[7] This requires a different focus than implementing novel techniques, as Ed Stetzer states: "If we do not have a missional strategy driven by solid theological and ecclesiological principles, we simply perpetuate culture-driven models of church and mission."[8]

Planted in the Anglican theological tradition, Reconciliation receives the core theological and ecclesiological principles from the liturgical life of the Church. The liturgical life, principally the eucharist, of the Church acts as *theologia prima,* the first means to know and articulate God and the life of faith.[9] Aidan Kavanagh articulates well, "The liturgical act is....in fact the primary and fundamental theological act from which all subsequent theological activity arises. The liturgical assembly is a theological corporation."[10] The role of liturgical practice as *theologia prima*, central to the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox traditions, contrasts to the formative centrality of doctrine or Scripture held in other denominational traditions. To fully comprehend the means and process of spiritual formation and discipleship, or necessary reorientation for spiritual formation, within the Anglican tradition requires attention to the liturgical practices and understandings of the congregation.

As will be noted regarding the work of Louis Weil and Paul Avis, the discussion of eucharistic liturgical theology often focuses upon the structure of the liturgy or actions

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[7] Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 1.

[8] Ed Stetzer, "The Evolution of Church Growth, Church Health, and the Missional Church" in *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* 17 (2006), 11.

[9] Leonel L. Mitchell, *Praying Shapes Believing* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1985), 2.

[10] Aidan Kavanagh, "Response: Primary Theology and Liturgical Act" in *Worship* 57:4 (July 1983), 321-2.

of the clergy, resulting in at least two deficiencies detrimental to a eucharistic missional praxis. Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemann discusses the first shortcoming in the practice of liturgical theology to reduce the consideration of the eucharist to matters of piety and "churchiness." Schmemann calls for the Church to consider theologically in the eucharist "not the various details of the rites and sacraments, which obviously underwent development and change and grew in complexity, but rather the fundamental structure of the eucharist, its shape...which can be traced back to the fundamental, apostolic principle of Christian worship." This theological narrowing also misappropriates the subjunctive quality of the eucharist. As Episcopal theologian Juan Oliver notes, "The exotic otherness of a liturgy from another time, place, and culture can too easily be confused with the radical otherness of God's Reign."[11] Within former colonies, such as is common in the Episcopal Church, this movement is deformative as eucharistic liturgical formation becomes the "ritualization of colonialism."[12] These theological reductions present the core challenge for missional praxis to emerge from eucharistic liturgical practice. Alexander Schmemann describes a crisis which "consists of a lack of connection between what is accomplished in the eucharist and how it is perceived, understood and lived."[13]

Due to this disconnection of the eucharistic *telos* and perception, this work will strike a middle way between the descriptive and prescriptive branches of liturgical

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[11] *Ibid.,* 13.

[12] *Ibid.*, 14.

[13] Alexander Schmemann, *For the Joy of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963), 9.

theology. This project therefore focuses upon the "physiology" (the functions and results) rather than "anatomy" (structure and history) of the eucharist.[14] The work will not be narrowly concerned with a recount of the historical development of the eucharistic liturgy or practice, nor the comparison of rites across denominational traditions. This project does not examine the struggle to define liturgical origins or theological validations for worship and sacraments, with an overarching universal practice or general norm. Maxwell Johnson observes the difficulty such endeavors,

> That is, in spite of the growing contemporary ecumenical convergence in liturgy (e.g., Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry), it is becoming quite difficult to maintain that there is much of anything which is constant and unchanging in the liturgical traditions of the churches of the early Christian period. What we see, instead, seems to be the Great Tradition in constant flux and development with no single discernible common pattern, ritual contents, or theological interpretation.[15]

Instead, this work desires to express the outcome and influence of a specific community's liturgical practice, Church of Reconciliation.

The results of this work, the development of "missional lay liturgists," will act as a contemporary expression of *mystagogia* (mystagogy) with the instruction upon the eucharistic mysteries provided through a missional lens. Mystogagy does not fall clearly within the confines of strict academic reflection of theological or historical portent of liturgical practice, it provides a deep significance in the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ. As Johannes Hofinger notes,

> Religious instruction is, from the very beginning, not so much history as

[14] Paul Meyendorff, "What is Liturgical Theology?" Writings, http://www.allsaints-stl.org/What%20Is%20Liturgical%20Theology%20-%20Web%20Version%202008.pdf (accessed August 2, 2014).

[15] Maxwell Johnson, "Can We Avoid Relativism in Worship? Liturgical Norms in the Light of Contemporary Liturgical Scholarship" in *Worship* 74:2 (March 2000), 136.

> "mystagogy," that is, an introduction into the Mystery of Christ, the holy knowledge of our vocation to a new life in and with Christ, instruction in the practice and development of this life. In this central task of religious education, the proper training in Christian worship, that is, the liturgy, takes an important part.[16]

Without a clear expression within the *theologia prima* of the Church, Mission remains a tangential program rather than central formative *raison d'être* for the Church. Without intentional and clear connection to the *theologia prima* of the Church, Mission cannot be "the whole Church bringing the whole Christ to the whole world."[17] It is in the necessary connection of Mission and the *theologia prima* of the eucharist, missional praxis becomes the expression of experience and reality of God's kingdom within the lives of the Church. Without connection to *theologia prima*, missional praxis lacks the theological and spiritual resources to inform the ecclesiology of the Church.

Mission requires foundation in the eucharist for two reasons. First, Mission is tied to the fundamental communal experience which identifies God, God's working in the world, and the nature of life extended by God in communion. As Dwight Zscheile states, "Episcopalians gather around the table, finding there an expression of God's grace and love, an experience of what it means to be the church in the Spirit's power."[18] Furthermore, the eucharist does more than express God's love. Eucharist ushers us into communion with God and therefore participation with God's love and desire. By considering James K.A. Smith's proposition that we hold a liturgical anthropology in

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[16] Gerard F. Baumbach, *Eucharistic Mystagogy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Bishops, 2011), 1.

[17] Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission*, 1.

[18] Dwight J. Zscheile, *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2012). Kindle Edition: Location 832.

which we are defined, and moved to action, by what we love and desire,[19] we begin to see communion with God in the eucharist as an experience which shares God's love and desire.

This substance of communion leads to the second reason for union of Mission and the eucharist, the experience of *missio Dei*. *Missio Dei* denotes not just the mission that belongs to God, but the mission that flows from the heart of God.[20] John Zizioulas develops an understanding of the historicity of God's work that "the eucharist manifests the *historical* form of the divine economy....The eucharist is thus the affirmation *par excellence* of history, the sanctification of time, by manifesting the Church as historical reality."[21] Eucharist is the manifestation of the *missio Dei* – the outpouring and sending forth of God in communion with the Holy Trinity for communion with humanity.

Assessing these considerations, this project provides a strategy to place the theological source for missional ecclesiology (being the Church in a way shaped by Mission) from the expression and formative realities of eucharistic liturgical practice. In these endeavors, the scope of the project orients discussion within the Anglican theological tradition and the ecclesial context of the Episcopal Church. This work will center on the eucharistic liturgical practice of the Episcopal Church, and not offer comparative analysis to other traditions. Additionally, the focus of this project remains in the clarification of the formative realities of the eucharist for the Church's substance as

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[19] James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013). Kindle Edition: Location 415.

[20] Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission,* 5.

[21] John Zizioulas, *Being is Communion* (Crestwood, NY St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 21.

Mission; therefore matters of ecclesial structure are not addressed. The following work will include three sections.

Beginning with this introduction, Part One describes the challenge and context for the project. Chapter 1 describes the specific context of the Episcopal Church of Reconciliation as illustrative of the influences and factors facing congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. The chapter articulates the challenge of reconciling contemporary missional theology and Anglican ecclesiology. This chapter includes history, leadership, current programming, and congregational transformation. The chapter will provide specific reflection on the possibilities and limitations of liturgy as the locus for the nurture of missional praxis.

Part Two will establish the theological foundations for this project, beginning with the literature review of six key works which include anthropology, ecclesiology from Protestant and Orthodox theological traditions, phenomenology, and Anglican missional study. The theological development of Chapter 3 begins with a review of Anglican eucharistic theology. This theological discussion includes biblical exegesis with particular attention on the Pauline development of identity and purpose in 1 Corinthians 11:26-32 and the Lukan use of ανάμνησις in the narrative of the Last Supper. This theological development will provide the framework to understand the inherent quality of eucharistic liturgical practice for incorporation with the *missio Dei*. This section then will demonstrate the theological correlates of liturgical formation in the life and action of God with the Church's missional expression of the life and action of God.

Part Three presents the formation and ministry program blueprint, describing the implementation of this project's pilot work within a specific timeframe and single

research scale. This section will identify the goals, content, leadership, and target population of the ministry. This section will also outline the specifics of the pilot project—a combination of ministry leader formation of action-reflection learning within a community of practice. Special attention will be given to the project's timeline, components, and logistics. This section will also provide an assessment of the project, including recommendations for improving and augmenting the ministry.

# CHAPTER 1

## CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES
## THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE FOR THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF RECONCILIATION AND THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN WEST TEXAS

Beginning with an overview of the journey of the Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, from congregational founding to the present, this chapter identifies societal, economic, and cultural factors which have drawn the congregation to seek a missional focus for ministry. Additionally, the congregation's attention to a missional change draws from the Anglican theological tradition, the Episcopal denomination, and the influence of the related diocesan judicatory. Taken into account are barriers to the development of missional praxis and liturgical formation within the Church of Reconciliation and the Episcopal Church.

### History and demographics of the Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio, Texas

The historical and ecclesial events of the time deeply influenced the founding and early development of Reconciliation. The congregation's history represents less than fifty years. The proximity of the congregation's establishment alleviates the difficulty of deciphering the congregation's culture from archives and impersonal documentation. Founding members survive still, offering clear voices to the context for the congregation

and hopes for ministry. Documents from recent congregational planning describe the development of an intentional congregational culture.

> The Church of Reconciliation was founded in 1968 in the wake of assassinations, race riots, and a theology that said "God Is Dead." We grew because we related to the brokenness of our world and the people who recognized the brokenness in themselves. We made God relevant through new ways of worship and acceptance.[22]

This culture of acceptance and inclusivity informed the naming, construction, and congregational dynamics. The name, "Church of Reconciliation," articulated a vision for the congregation to be "an agent of reconciliation between God and man, among human relationships, among ideologies and races and ethnic groups."[23] The church building took on design characteristics, modern and functional, of the emerging notions of the period.[24] Constructed in 1974, the church's sanctuary includes a circular design, a large central altar, and full-length clear glass windows on three sides of the building. The building design, considered *avant garde* for the region and diocese,[25] manifested the congregation's desire to be a symbol of openness and light.[26] As the founding priest, Joseph Brown, stated in 1968, "Our Church is dedicated to liturgical experimentation as well as parish-structure experimentation."[27]

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[22] *Visioning and Strategic Plan, Welcoming Campus Report, Final*, 1.

[23] The Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, *A Parish Profile* (San Antonio, TX: Church of Reconciliation, 2002), 2.

[24] F. Debuyst, "Architectural Setting (Modern) and the Liturgical Movement" in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986).

[25] *Diocese of West Texas Centennial History 2nd ed*. (San Antonio, TX: The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, 2004), 56.

[26] *A Parish Profile,* 2.

[27] *Alternative and Variety of Worship Study* (San Antonio, TX: Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, October 2011), 2.

The founding characteristics of Reconciliation of openness, inclusivity, and reconciliation beyond the congregation emerged as distinctively forward-thinking within tensions between the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas and the national Episcopal Church. At this period of time, controversy consumed the institutional leadership and governing bodies of the Diocese and national Church. The debates reflected local diocesan disagreement with the national Church's distribution of financial and personnel resources for socio-economic programming deemed by many in the local Diocese as "liberally minded and dominated."[28] Reconciliation's founding spoke to the *zeitgeist* of the matters, as diocesan historians recount: "The major controversy that now rose within the Church revolved mainly on the question of the Church's proper role amid, and reaction to, the conflicts and controversies of the day."[29]

The establishment of Reconciliation spoke to spiritual and demographic realities. The demographic growth of the area reached a peak for the decade 1970 through 1979. For the neighborhood surrounding the congregation site, over 36 percent of the homes were built during this period. Over 90 percent of residences in the area during this period were single-family detached homes. During this initial decade residents represented new arrivals to the San Antonio area as well as established households migrating to one of the new and outermost suburbs. For the founding decade of the 1970s, and adjacent decades, more than 80 percent of residents of the surrounding neighborhood were of white racial and ethnic identity.[30]

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[28] *Diocese of West Texas Centennial History, 2nd ed*., 46.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] Larry R. Wynn, *Neighborhood White Paper (*San Antonio, TX: Episcopal Church of

In the period following founding, 1979 to 1996, the congregation grew in membership and congregational development. Through this period, membership required three weekend worship services. Additional buildings were constructed, a Parish hall in 1983 and Ministry Center (with offices, library, and education classroom) in 1996. Home groups, called "House Churches," were established among the congregation as a way to nurture relationships in smaller group settings. The congregation gave a focus on supporting youth and families, adding staff personnel for children's ministries. An appreciation developed for intellectual inquiry and spiritual renewal as congregants participated in educational and spiritual programming with local theological institutions. The spiritual renewal development is evidenced in the congregation's development of a Labyrinth, heavy participation in spiritual renewal retreat programs such as Cursillo, and internal gathering of a Centering Prayer group.[31]

The congregation maintained the founding ethos of inclusivity and openness, leading to distinctive community relationships. Reconciliation was one of the first churches in San Antonio to open its campus to the Alcoholics Anonymous community by hosting weekly meetings.[32] At a time when divorce was not widely accepted, nor divorcees welcomed into congregations, Reconciliation started a divorce ministry. During this period, Reconciliation also became a congregation offering welcome and safety to openly gay members. Likewise, many people with disabilities and their families felt

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Reconciliation, May 9, 2012), 5.

[31] *Parish Profile*, 3-6.

[32] *Neighborhood Design Team Plan* (San Antonio, TX: Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, October 2012), 4.

valued and included in a way they had never been before in other congregations.[33] These marks of congregational development would be key indicators of desired health, vitality, and congregational life in the era of the Church Health Movement.[34]

The years of 1997 to 2001 brought a period of transition. For the congregation, the time period was a season of change and uncertainty.[35] The surrounding neighborhood has changed in many ways from the founding decade. At its founding, Reconciliation's wooded bucolic campus acted as the entry point for the predominately white middle-class outer suburb. As the city of San Antonio grew, the surrounding neighborhood became an interior residential area of two literal geographic halves ringed by professional, medical, and commercial areas. Reconciliation is situated in the middle. The east side of the main thoroughfare, Starcrest Boulevard, is bordered by several apartment and condominium complexes as well as some single-family homes made up of predominantly multi-cultural working, middle-class families. The west side of Starcrest Boulevard consists mainly of white, upper middle-class retirees in condominium complexes or single-family homes.[36]

Demographic statistics from the neighborhood elementary school, Serna Elementary, demonstrate the respective changes, and pressures, for the surrounding community. In the academic year of 2010 through 2011, while the state public school population grew by 1.8 percent and school district by 6.3 percent, the Serna student body

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[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Ed Stetzer, "The Evolution of Church Growth, Church Health, and the Missional Church," 12-15.

[35] The Rev. Robert Woody, Rector of Church of Reconciliation, interviewed by William Allport, San Antonio, TX, October 4, 2013.

[36] *Neighborhood Design Team Plan*, 5-6.

increased by 16.2 percent. Of this student body, over 60 percent live in apartments, and over 80 percent fall within state designations of economic disadvantage.[37] The elementary school also experiences a student mobility rate above 90 percent.[38] While Reconciliation demonstrated expressions of ministry and characteristics of a healthy congregation, a clear disconnect with the surrounding community emerged.

Despite the changes to the surrounding neighborhood, three specific circumstances represented seismic events for Reconciliation. First, as the congregation undertook the organizational work in preparation and execution of a capital campaign in 2004, a resident of the surrounding neighborhood gave a gift of $15,000 for the express use for "something on the church campus" for the benefit of the neighborhood.[39] Second, the Rector undertook directed professional study and exploration of alternative models for congregational ministry in response to his experience of stagnation in worship attendance and decrease in financial stewardship.[40] Specifically, the Rector noted experiences during sabbatical travels to Rwanda and study of the book *The Present Future* by Reggie McNeal.[41] Third, the congregation experienced trauma in the winter of 2009 when the church campus was the scene of a sexual assault and rape on a Sunday

[37] *PEIMS Student Data*, (San Antonio: Serna Elementary School, November 30, 2011).

[38] Larry R. Wynn, *Neighborhood White Paper*, 5.

[39] The Rev. Robert Woody, interview, October 4, 2013.

[40] The Episcopal Church, "Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio, Texas" Studying Your Congregation, http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/studying-your-congregation-and-community (accessed October 6, 2013).

[41] The Rev. Robert Woody, interview, October 4, 2013.

morning prior to worship services.[42]

The progression of these jolted the congregation's institutional stagnation, awakening the congregation to a deeper calling as people of God. These realities initiated a process to move away from an "attractional model"[43] of ministry towards emerging missional understandings of the Church that is oriented externally and seeking interaction with the external community and culture. The initial scope and shape of this "missional church" orientation for Reconciliation focused on the development of new programs and strategies.[44] Additional efforts have been made to change the structure and patterns of leadership, embracing shared models of planning and action.[45]

**Denominational and Judicatory Influences**

In addition to the above context, Reconciliation is shaped and informed by two specific factors. The congregation is influenced by the unique ecclesial culture and history of the denominational judicatory, the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. Identifiable matters related to the theological outlook of the Diocese, regional demographic realities, and institutional pressures on the congregation figure significantly upon the life of the congregation. The theological outlook of Reconciliation is further influenced by the Anglican theological tradition.

Three aspects of the denominational and judicatory relationships influence the context and challenges of the missional development of Reconciliation. First, the

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[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 49-53.

[44] The Rev. Robert Woody, interview, October 4, 2013.

[45] Alternative and Variety Worship Design Team, *Visioning and Strategic Plan*, 3-5.

congregation is influenced by the specific Anglican ecclesiological and theological tradition given as a congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. As described in historical formularies of the Church of England,[46] the Anglican theological tradition (and the "Episcopal" descendent form in the United States) does not provide fundamental dogma or ideological texts upon which later Anglican teaching is based. It is not "a confessional tradition."[47] The emergence of the Church of England was a decisive and specific development creating a *via media* (middle way) theological compromise drawing from Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed streams of Christianity in the Reformation of the 1500s.

This *via media* had a three-fold theological matrix of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason applied to ecclesial development, thought, and expression. First, the emerging Church of England, and her descendent ecclesial bodies, had a continuous history reaching back to the Apostolic Church by adherence to the Tradition of the Church. Second, the Church must hold in conformity with the teaching of Scripture which can be accomplished without breaking the continuity of faith and history. Third, the Church would use thoughtful, reasoned, continued evaluation of practice and ceremony for reform and renewal; however ideas of value and ceremony which do not explicitly contradict Scripture can be retained.[48] Derived from the sixteenth-century French philosophical notions of *raison*, this reasoned approach is "a counterpoise to unthinking

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[46] Covenant Design Group, "Our Inheritance of Faith" in *The Anglican Communion Covenant* (London: Anglican Consultative Counsel, 2009), 3.

[47] Philip H.E. Thomas, "Doctrine of the Church" in *The Study of Anglicanism*, eds. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (London: SPCK/Fortress Press, 1998), 249-250.

[48] *Ibid.*, 251-253.

biblicalism or unthinking conformity to historical precedent.[49]" Lacking an ecclesial *magisterium* with the capacity to articulate and maintain a doctrinal standard or community boundary, the Anglican theological tradition represents not a system of belief but a distinctively theological ethos: a method.[50]

The second influence of the Anglican theological tradition for the Church of Reconciliation emerges in the actual instrument of ecclesiological unity. The unified *via media* theological ethos points to the concrete instrument of unity not in strict doctrinal and dogmatic boundaries of orthodoxy, but rather orthopraxy. *S*pecifically the Church receives unity through the practice and use of common prayer in a uniform liturgy. To this respect, the authoritative instrument for Church unity is the liturgical *ordo* articulated in *The Book of Common Prayer*.[51]

This distinguishing mark of the Anglican theological tradition creates a base for a unique ecclesiology rooted in the liturgical actions and practice of the people of the Church. As Louis Weil states, "Anglicanism gives forceful expression to the ancient adage, *Lex orandi legem statuat credendi*, 'the law of prayer establishes the law of faith'."[52] The experience of liturgical rites functions didactically, teaching the notions of faith. In this understanding, Christian faith is not primarily a mental activity but rather

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[49] A.S. McGrade, "Reason" in *The Study of Anglicanism,* eds. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (London: SPCK/Fortress Press, 1998), 115.

[50] Eimhin Walsh, "Communion, Church and Crisis: Communion Ecclesiology in an Anglican Context," paper delivered to International Eucharistic Congress 2012, http://www.iec2012.ie/media/1EimhinWalsh1.pdf (accessed November 13, 2013).

[51] Louis Weil, *Liturgical Sense* (New York: Seabury Books, 2013), 159.

[52] Louis Weil, "The Gospel in Anglicanism" in *The Study of Anglicanism* eds. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (London: SPCK/Fortress Press, 1998), 59.

one in which the whole person is involved. As former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams states in reflection on the baptism, eucharist, and prayer, "those activities tells us about the essence of Christian life, and what kind of people we might hope to become where these things are done."[53]

The local judicatory represents the third influence upon Reconciliation. The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas is a diocese of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, whose territory comprises the south-central portion of the state of Texas. In the year 2012, the Diocese comprised ninety-one parishes,[54] 24,071 active baptized members, and average Sunday attendance of 9,136,[55] across sixty counties and 69,000 square miles.[56] In addition to congregational facilities, the Diocese includes camp and conference facilities in Texas and Colorado, twenty-seven schools, and a nineteen-acre diocesan center. In spite of the contemporary institutional presence, the Diocese emerged from the humble and missionary roots of the Episcopal Church's first foreign mission program, established by the General Convention[57] of 1874, to the then foreign

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[53] Rowan Williams, *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer* (London: Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge, 2014), vii-viii.

[54] The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, "About the Diocese," *Diocese of West Texas*, http://www.dwtx.org/about-the-diocese (accessed November 15, 2013).

[55] The Episcopal Church, *Statistical Totals for the Episcopal Church by Province: 2011-2012*. (New York: The Episcopal Church, 2012).

[56] The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, "About the Diocese," *Diocese of West Texas*, http://www.dwtx.org/about-the-diocese (accessed November 15, 2013).

[57] The General Convention of the Episcopal Church is the national legislative body of the Episcopal Church. Meeting triennially, it consists of a House of Bishops and a House of Deputies, lay persons and clergy from each diocese, area mission, and the Convocation of the American Churches in Europe. It alone has authority to amend the Prayer Book, the church's Constitution and canons, and to determine the program and budget of the General Convention, including missionary, educational, and social programs authorized on behalf of the larger Church. Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, eds., *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church: A User Friendly Reference for Episcopalians* (New York:

Republic of Texas.[58]

The transformation of the Church in West Texas from Missionary-District to ecclesial institution has created a mixed expression of the missionary Anglican ecclesiological tradition. History holds examples of a Diocese lead by bishops who struggled to carry forward institutional establishment and maintenance without losing the founding missionary ethos. While new congregations were established in urban areas for predominantly middle-class white households, seven of the nine bishops which have led the Diocese have publicly urged the diocese and congregations to show concern for the people outside the membership rolls, particularly the economic poor and Hispanic community.[59]

Despite an ecclesiological and theological tradition inclined to expansion, over thirty years of statistical data illustrate a steady decline in membership for the Episcopal Church in the United States and Diocese of West Texas. Nationally, the number of Episcopalians has declined from a high of 3,615,643[60] members in 1965 to 2,066,710 in 2012.[61] Following a 1970 membership apex in the Diocese of West Texas of 31,000,[62] membership reached 24,071 in 2012.[63] Like Reconciliation, Diocese of West Texas has

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Church Publishing Incorporated, 2000), 214.

[58] *Diocese of West Texas Centennial History, 2nd ed*., 8.

[59] *Ibid*., 15, 19, 42, 50, 53, 60, 65, 66.

[60] Dwight Zscheile, *People of the Way*, Location 99.

[61] *Statistical Totals for the Episcopal Church by Province: 2011-2012* (New York: The Episcopal Church, 2012).

[62] *Diocese of West Texas Centennial History, 2nd ed*., 55.

[63] *Statistical Totals for the Episcopal Church by Province: 2011-2012*.

experienced the challenges of unity in the face of socio-cultural changes, including overall religious disaffiliation,[64] gender equity of leadership,[65] and equity issues for homosexual individuals.[66]

**Strengths and Challenges for Episcopal Church of Reconciliation**

In response to the neighborhood changes, and formed by the Anglican theological tradition, Church of Reconciliation has entered a period of self-identified "missional church development." The circumstance of this missional development phase for the congregation's life highlights four strengths and two challenges for the congregation for developing a congregational life which is informed and formed by the Mission of the Church.

The first strength is not only the congregation's recognition of contextual changes but also the need for "the church to be doing something different" by moving away from established institutional maintenance, church growth, or church health models for organization and action. The congregation has moved to reclaim its history and a deeper understanding of God's expectations for the Church in order to be more than a group that has "substituted its own charter of church as clubhouse where religious people hang out with other people who think, dress, vote, and believe like them."[67] This initial step represents the most challenging step for organizational transformation.

The second strength is the congregation's intentional organizational steps to

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[64] Dwight Zscheile, *People of the Way*, Location 238.

[65] *Diocese of West Texas Centennial History, 2nd ed*., 59.

[66] *Ibid*., 69.

[67] Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), xv-xvi.

discern this different way. In 2011 Reconciliation undertook a year-long process to discern a new vision and strategic plan for the congregation. Through a professionally facilitated Appreciative Inquiry[68], a majority of the congregation affirmed a desire to reach out beyond the church membership and campus as the highest priority. [69] A new Parish Mission Statement declares, "We seek and experience God through worship and discovery as we welcome, embrace and serve one another and our neighbors."[70]

The third strength has been the development of organizational partnerships and relationships with external secular entities. In 2010, church facilities began hosting a day site for Reaching Maximum Independence, Inc., a San Antonio-area nonprofit organization that helps adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities develop capabilities for independent work and living.[71] In 2012, Reconciliation led efforts to develop a community-based neighborhood coalition creating regular collaboration with the area elementary school, neighborhood home owners' association, and managers of adjacent apartments.[72] This neighborhood coalition afforded the opportunity for the

[68] Appreciative Inquiry is a model for analysis, decision-making, and the development of change used particularly within organizations. Growing out of the Positive Psychology movement and developed within the Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University in the 1980s, the model provides alternative framework for change not rooted in "problem-solving." Appreciative Inquiry identifies a positive core, and connecting to heighten energy, sharpen vision, and inspire action for change. The Center for Appreciative Inquiry, "What is Appreciative Inquiry," http://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/ more-on-ai/what-is-appreciative-inquiry-ai/, (accessed December 3, 2014).

[69] Larry R. Wynn, *Neighborhood White Paper*, 2.

[70] Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, "About Us," *Episcopal Church of Reconciliation*, http://www.cor-satx.org/Pages/aboutus.aspx (accessed November 15, 2013).

[71] Reaching Maximum Independence, Inc., *Reaching Maximum Independence, Inc.,* http:www.rmihomes.org (accessed November 15, 2013).

[72] Larry R. Wynn, *Neighborhood White Paper*, 3.

church to host and coordinate the summer enrichment program for the area elementary school which was previously planned for termination due to state government funding cuts.[73]

The final strength arises in the development of a new hope for the life of the congregation founded in mission-shaped ministry. Increased participation for new mission-shaped ministries, such as the waiting list for participants for the Reconciliation-hosted community garden, indicates hopeful signs for organizational planning. This hope was also expressed in personal statements by members of the congregation during 2013 story-sharing in small groups.[74] Lesslie Newbigin considers hope essential to the understanding and experience of the Resurrection of Christ for the life shared by the Church and perspective the Church holds towards the world.

> The event of the resurrection...breaks every mold that would imprison God in the rationalism of a fallen world. But it is the starting point for a new kind of rationality, for the possibility of living hopefully in a world without hope, for the perpetual praise of God who not only creates order out of chaos but also breaks through fixed orders to create ever-new situations of surprise and joy.[75]

The transformation of Reconciliation comes not without challenges. First, the diversity of congregation members and differences of socio-religious outlook challenge the congregation to nurture identity and unity that is consistently missional and Episcopalian (Anglican). Some members regard the purpose of congregational life to be unchanged from notions of maintaining an institutional establishment predominant from

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[73] *Ibid*, 2.

[74] Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, "After Report" in *Here to Hear: Getting Beyond Relationships of Like* (San Antonio, TX: Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, 2013), 19.

[75] Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness of the Greeks: The Gospel in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 150.

the 1950s.[76] Others hold that the Church should focus on in the internal life of the congregation which cultivates a personal pious spirituality, such as the previous efforts from the church health movement.[77] This diversity of opinions includes continued concerns associated with institutional parochial maintenance, such as concerns for records associated with the Annual Parochial Report required of all Episcopal congregations.[78] Quantifiable marks and measures of missional ministry do not fall within well-established denominational measures, such as average Sunday attendance, Christian formation participation, or financial balance sheets. Finally, the congregational diversity includes members supportive of a missional shift for the congregation. These members struggle with the ability of the congregation to be missional. These individuals would appreciate Lesslie Newbigin's call for a "'de-clericalized' theology"[79] and "critique of denominationalism"[80] as essential to the Church's ability to be missionary in western culture.

Additionally, the challenge of missional development for Reconciliation remains a matter of program development and organizational strategy with a yet-to-be articulated

[76] Dwight Zscheile, *People of the Way*.

[77] Ed Stetzer, "The Evolution of Church Growth, Church Health, and the Missional Church," 15.

[78] Required by canon, every Episcopal congregation completes an annual statistical report called the parochial report. The forms are designed by the National Church, and are divided into two sections: (1) Membership, Attendance and Services, and (2) Stewardship and Financial Information. The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, "Parochial Reports," Administration, http://www.edow.org/for-parishes/administration/parochial-reports (accessed November 28, 2013).

[79] Leslie Newbigin, *Foolishness of the Greeks: the Gospel in Western Culture*, 141-4.

[80] *Ibid.*, 144-145.

theological foundation.[81] The impetus for missional change for Reconciliation has been based within responses to the cultural and social changes in their surrounding neighborhood. This theological deficiency can leave missional change with the shortcomings of the Church Growth and Church Health Movements.[82]

**Current ecclesiological praxis response to challenges**

The current ecclesiological praxis of the Episcopal Church and the congregation bear on a final aspect of the context of Reconciliation in specific ways. First, the denomination bears specific influence in the areas of polity. Next, the praxis of the Episcopal Church bears deficiencies in the area of Christian formation, propagating the perceived disconnect of liturgical practice with missional praxis. Finally, the current ecclesiological praxis of the Episcopal Church continues limitations for formation through liturgical practice.

While the main polities of American Christian churches are either congregational or episcopal, the Anglican polity of the Episcopal Church employs a middle form of these polities, using aspects of both. This Anglican polity provides for the day-to-day operation of the Church by clergy, but governing authority ultimately resides in the council of the clerical and lay leaders. In this form, the basic unit of the Church is the diocese with oversight by a bishop and synodical council, with practical and congregational matters delegated to local clergy and vestries. This form of polity or governance means congregations are not congregational—congregations do not deliberate as a whole in issues of governance. Instead the authority and the responsibility fall to the delegated and

[81] The Rev. Robert Woody, interview, October 4, 2013.

[82] Ed Stetzer. "The Evolution of Church Growth, Church Health, and the Missional Church," 11.

elected individuals of the vestry.[83]

Episcopal congregations, such as Reconciliation, offer various programs and classes with the aim of Christian education of members. Despite these efforts, significant deficiencies remain, particularly in area of missiology. Contemporary Christian formation is directed predominantly toward the preparation of individuals to navigate an internal enclave church culture and fulfill roles within internal church programming.[84]

Reconciliation struggles to find the congruence between the missional development for the congregation and the liturgical life and practice of the Anglican tradition. The Visioning Process celebrated the centrality of liturgical practice as one of the five identified marks of the congregation.[85] However, incongruence remains between liturgical practice and the intended missional changes of the congregation. As the 2011 Alternative and Variety Worship Design Team of the congregation reports regarding the intent for changes to the liturgical practices of the congregation, "Our primary goal is for our entire worshipping experience at Reconciliation to accurately reflect both who we are as a community and who we are aspiring to become."[86]

Finally, while the Anglican theological tradition holds primacy and centrality in liturgical practice as visible means of God's grace, liturgical practice is not a perfect instructor. The formative and missional influence of liturgical practice has been limited

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[83] The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York, *Vestry Manual, 3rd ed.* (Albany: The Episcopal Diocese of New York, May 2012), 4-6.

[84] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 89-91.

[85] Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, "About Us," *Episcopal Church of Reconciliation*, http://www.cor-satx.org/Pages/aboutus.aspx (accessed November 15, 2013).

[86] Alternative and Variety Worship Design Team, *Visioning and Strategic Plan*, 7

by the ability of the individual and community of faith to make connections with the rest of daily living. As Weil states, "The living out of the connections between worship and life takes place for Christians, in the context of the Church. It is a major part of the Church's prophetic work, or its speaking for God, to enable people to make the connections so that worship is not reduced to a pious Sunday morning routine."[87] This reality highlights the two foci of sacraments: worship by the Church and the needs of the public world. Sacraments not only unite the people of the Church with God and a family of faith, but the lives of the world. Sacraments enact the reality not of a private means of grace, but grace poured out to all creation.[88] The limits to this grace remain the willingness of the community of faith to be sent forth as the Church in the world.

[87] Louis Weil, "Gospel and Anglicanism", 77.

[88] Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission*, 28.

# PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

# CHAPTER TWO

## REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The literature resources reviewed in this chapter provide a deeper understanding for the development of missional praxis within a community, the formative realities of liturgical practice, and the "missionality" (missional nature) inherent to the Anglican tradition expressed in the Episcopal Church. Half of the selected literature draws from sources outside religious disciplines or the Anglican theological community, beginning with the social science context for understanding the impact of communities of practice for organizational and social change. The works of James K.A. Smith and Louis Weil provide specific development of the formative realities of liturgy, with Weil's focus upon liturgy within the Episcopal tradition. The works of Gordon Lathrop and John Zizioulas articulate specifically liturgical ecclesiologies, the "way of being" the church in relationship with God, demonstrating the theological and ecclesiological direction of liturgical formation. The works of Paul Avis and Dwight Zscheile articulate the "missionality" inherent to the Anglican tradition.

***Cultivating Communities of Practice***
**Etienne Wenger, Richard A. McDermott, and William Snyder.**

Writing for contemporary community and business leaders with interest in the development of learning organizations and knowledge management, the writers give definition and practical steps for the development of "communities of practice." According to the authors of *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, communities of practice comprise groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis.[89] The authors present a unique perspective on the development of community within a technology-driven environment built upon information and knowledge with cultural tendencies for social individualism and atomization. The writers hold that knowledge, innovation, and learning are social phenomena, developed by the informal interaction of diverse individuals through "personal relationships and established ways of interacting."[90] Based in the tradition and thought of community-based organizing, such as that of the Industrial Areas Foundation, the authors attempt to apply such an approach for the organization of knowledge. The book envisions communities of practice as the means to promote stability and connection in a world increasingly mobile, global, and changing.

The authors provide the theoretical and practical aspects for the development of communities of practice in four sections. Chapters 1 and 2 provide a basic definition of

[89] Etienne Wenger, Richard A. McDermott, and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), Kindle Edition: Location 145.

[90] *Ibid.*, Location 159.

communities of practice with justification for communities of practice within organizations. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 articulate the process for the creation and maturation of communities of practice, including seven basic principles undertaken in the design of community. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 describe various challenges in the development of communities of practice, specifically the challenges of communities that lack common location ("distributed communities"); the possible limitations of communities; the challenge of measurement and management of communities; and the corporate challenges of such knowledge initiatives. Chapter 10 provides a poignant social commentary as the implications of communities of practice beyond single organizations or enterprises, but market, industry, or civil networks.

*Cultivating Communities of Practice* provides three significant contributions to the development of a Eucharistic ecclesiologically derived missional praxis. First the authors unintentionally provide a secular organizational strategy to understand, and nurture, God's people as the *κοινωνία* of the Church. The three elements of a community of practice – domain, community, and practice – describe a typical church congregation in organizational terms. The application of business or organizational management knowledge is not new to church development.[91] The novelty of cultivating communities of practice provides practical means for the development of the Church's *κοινωνία* due to the nature of communities of practice as predicated on the development of informal, but intentional, relationships across a diverse body of individuals. This interactive and interdependent gathering draws experience, perspective, and expertise as individuals are

[91] Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, *Emerging Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 20-21.

incorporated into the larger community. This synergy provides for organic contextually responsive patterns amid the current, and future, culture and social changes.

Second, the foundational seven design principles of communities of practice offer a framework for the development of community within the missional praxis of congregations. As the Church seeks missional praxis, the communities of practice paradigm demonstrates a process to gather participation, wisdom, and knowledge from a diversity of broad constituent groups. As the authors describe in their discussion of "civil society," the development of communities of practice can bring concrete results for community mobilization and transformation. While communities of practice may be inherent within the Church, the process provided can help launch, nurture, and guide the efforts of the Church in missional praxis.

Third, *Cultivating Communities of Practice* provides a clear commentary on the process of over-organization and management, and individual atomization, resulting from the twentieth century's industrial and technology development. The application of communities of practice within business and industrial sectors indicates a renewal of one of the Church's greatest hallmarks – purposeful fellowship. *Cultivating Communities of Practice* points to the clear sociological need for purposeful fellowship.

The resources of *Cultivating Communities of Practice* are limited by the narrow focus of their application to the secular and commercial sector. The text concludes with the statement, "Firms that understand how to translate the power of communities into successful knowledge organizations will be the architects of tomorrow—not only because they will be more successful in the marketplace, but also because they will serve as a

learning laboratory for exploring how to design the world as a learning system."[92] However, if communities of practice can "reweave the world," as the authors extol, the effectiveness of this process cannot be limited to the business sector.

### *Imagining the Kingdom*, James K.A. Smith

In *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, philosopher James K.A. Smith strives for two objectives. First, Smith draws from anthropology and phenomenology to develop a "liturgical anthropology" which considers human beings "'liturgical animals,' creatures who can't not worship and who are fundamentally formed by worship practices."[93] Whether secular or sacred, the liturgies – communal, embodied rhythms, rituals, and routines – are essentially formative because these practices "over time quietly and unconsciously prime and shape our desires and our fundamental longings."[94] Therefore, he proposes that every liturgy is a form of pedagogy that teaches us in a precognitive way to be a certain type of person and receive an understanding of the world. From this understanding, Smith provides constructive concerns and specific implications of liturgical anthropology to encourage greater intentionality for liturgical practice, formation, and change.

*Imagining the Kingdom* develops and applies this liturgical anthropology in four sections. In the first, Smith draws from both anthropology and phenomenology to "displace our naive 'intellectualism' (whereby we mistakenly assume that we think our

[92] Etienne Wenger, Richard A. McDermott, and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, Location 3797

[93] Smith, James K. A., *Imagining the Kingdom*, location 333.

[94] *Ibid.,* Location 344.

way into action)"[95] in order to recognize how liturgies, whether secular or sacred, kinesthetically work in the formation of our desire, our longing, and our understanding of the world. This section carries a strong phenomenological analysis of action in relationship with our culture in order to trace the process by which desire is shaped through the routine habits engaging our culture. Smith points to the embodied and fundamental way of intuiting our way in the world, and that many of our actions originate between intellect and instinct.

The second section develops the central role which shared communal practices and stories play in the formation of the embodied knowledge. As social creatures, our participation in a community results in a "way of being" in the world that is handed down. From this, we adopt a "habitus...the habitual way we construct our world."[96] This process develops an embedded tradition as *habitus* endures over time. These are communicable and cultivate meaningful action. As Smith stated, "The core of the person is what he or she loves, and that is bound up with what they worship—that insight recalibrates the radar for cultural analysis. The rituals and practices that form our loves spill out well beyond the sanctuary. Many secular liturgies are trying to get us to love some other kingdom and some other gods."[97]

In the third section, Smith describes the directive and formative role of imagination, through cultural metaphor and narrative, for this embodied knowledge and *habitus*. The world, as Smith views it, is liturgical: filled with rituals and practices that

[95] *Ibid,* Location 648.

[96] *Ibid,* Location 1846.

[97] David Neff, "You can't think your way to God," *Christianity Today,* May 2013, 54.

constitute the embodied stories of a community. These rituals and practices form identity and instill visions of the good life in a manner that surpasses other formations to be absorbed into the imaginative epicenter of action and behavior. Through stories, images, and visions of the good life, these liturgies form our desires, and therefore motivate our actions.

In the fourth section, Smith applies this phenomenological and anthropological analysis to Christian worship as the primary engine of spiritual formation. The alternative to cultural liturgies, such as the shopping mall or media, is the historic practice of Christian worship. By immersion in the story of the gospel, habituated week after week through worship and liturgy, we replace the "story in our bones" with the story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, fundamentally reorienting us to the world. The historic practices of Christian liturgy, with their emphasis on repetition, wholeness, embodied practice, and aesthetics, is designed to address the whole person.

*Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* provides two significant contributions to the development of a eucharistic ecclesiologically derived missional praxis. First, Smith's basis for discussion within anthropological and phenomenological knowledge expands the comprehension of the formative intent, kinesthetic process, and effects of regular liturgical practice. Smith provides insights and development of these understandings from resources "outside the camp circle" of Anglican theological formation and discussion.

Second, Smith champions not just the formative power of liturgical practices, but the centrality of liturgical practice for expanding the scope of, and expression of, the missional purposes and activities of the Church. As he states, "So it is precisely an

expansive sense of mission that requires formation. It is the missional *telos* of Christian action that requires us to be intentional about the formative power of Christian practices."[98] This formative relationship flows from experience of sacred liturgies in the shaping of our desires and worldview to that of God: "Worship is the space in which we learn to take the right things for granted precisely so we can bear witness to the world that is to come and…labor to make and remake God's world in accord with his desires for creation."[99]

Smith's work in *Imagining the Kingdom* is limited by the manner that the power and influence of liturgical practice is vaunted without articulation of a process for developing the accompanying reflection and "intellectual education." Smith carries a bias toward traditional forms and practices. While he understands these traditional forms to maintain a specific wisdom and logic which attune our being-in-the-world, unfortunately, the possibilities for liturgical formation are only received by those present in traditional worship or predisposed to seek the experience. In an era of diminishing church affiliation and comprehension,[100] the ability of the Church to share God's narrative to a populace which lacks the basic vocabulary to understand the story, images, and wisdom is greatly reduced.

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[98] *Ibid*., Location 3299.

[99] *Ibid*., Location 326.

[100] Religion and Public Life Project, Pew Research Institute, " 'Nones' on the Rise" in *Pew Research Center's Religion & Life Project*, http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/ (accessed November 28, 2013).

### *Liturgical Sense: The Logic of Rite*, Louis Weil

From his experience as an Episcopal priest and participation in over 30 years of liturgical theological instruction, Weil offers a work contrary to the tradition of liturgical manuals which focus on ceremonial acts or trappings. In *Liturgical Sense: The Logic of Rite*, Weil describes the significance of liturgy, liturgical practice, and the intended results and possibilities if we take liturgical practice to heart. His historical and theological reflections point both to the "common sense" of Episcopal liturgical rites and the "aesthetic sense" of the rites. Weil directs us to recognize our inherent ability to "think symbolically," and therefore reclaim the "liturgical sense" of the church.

Weil calls for the renewal of this liturgical sense in three parts. First, he sets to restore liturgical rites and practice as "the common action of the whole people of God, and not merely an act of the ordained which the people observe."[101] Weil describes the theological re-emphasis produced by the 1979 revision in the Episcopal Church of *The Book of Common Prayer*. He briefly traces the historical development of eucharistic ritual models and formularies from the earliest evidence through the Reformation. Weil's observations then focus, nearly exclusively, on the eucharistic liturgical practices of the Episcopal Church.

In the next two parts, Weil expounds on the matters of the "the liturgical act" and then specific practices incorporated in the liturgical observance. In discussing "the liturgical act," he focuses not on matters of "customary" but rather "factors that form the underlying aspects of liturgical rites in general: how those rites embody the common

[101] Louis Weil, *Liturgical Sense,* Location 223.

understanding of how such a rite will be performed in a particular time and context."[102] In this framework, Weil desires to break the historical development of an "individualization mode of participation."[103] He highlights the understanding that the liturgical act is a "sensual corporate prayer" that also provides an icon of the Church ("a mirror of that community's self-understanding as 'Church'").[104] Weil then explores specific considerations in the eucharistic liturgical act – the laying-on-of-hands, the prayer of consecration – with the attention given "not [to] ritual trivia, but rather the inner substance and meaning of what the rites signify." [105]

The final portion of Weil's work calls for the true "sense" which is bound up in, and communicated by, the Episcopal eucharistic liturgy. Without a renewed "liturgical sense," Anglicans blunder forward as our predecessors, "living off our liturgical heritage without adequately mining the depth of its meaning, the ways in which it embodies for us our encounter with the Holy One." [106]

Weil's articulation of the intent and meaning of the "liturgical sense" of the liturgical practice *in the Episcopal Church* provides his contribution to the development of the specific context of this project. Weil's observations could offer a "case study" for the application of material from *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works.* Lifting the discussion of liturgical practices above the typical discussions of liturgical customary,

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[102] *Ibid.,* Location 546.

[103] *Ibid.,* Location 557.

[104] *Ibid.,* Location 715.

[105] *Ibid.,* Location 877.

[106] *Ibid.,* Location 1217.

accoutrement, and expression, Weil cements "liturgical sense" to a comprehension of these practices with greater depth.

Unfortunately, Weil's contribution to this project is limited in two respects. First, much of the reflection and discussion of the nuances and ritual actions of liturgical practice remain focused on the role and participation of clergy. This misses the opportunity to articulate the kinesthetic and participatory elements that afford for the formation of the rest of the congregation. Second, Weil limits the "liturgical sense" or meaningfulness to the specific experience *in situ* of the liturgical activity, rather than any resultant expressions in daily life and action.

### ***Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology*, Gordon Lathrop**

Lathrop gives a unique contribution to the discussion of ecclesiology and questions of what builds, sustains, and defines those communities of faith called the Church. Lathrop bases his understanding of Church not in tradition, structure, leadership, or confessional, but in the common actions and practices across theological traditions – word, baptism, and Lord's Supper – that shape the common life of believers. This approach brings a different basis for ecclesiology in liturgical practice, thus a "liturgical ecclesiology" of which the common practices are considered "as the center of assembly, as the hearts and grounds for church unity, and as the original pattern for the church's encounter with culture." [107] Rather than the nature of the church being formulated and then given expression, understanding the church comes through the experience and very virtue of the gathering for baptism, word, and the Supper. The practices fashion a holy

[107] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy People* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), Kindle Edition: Location 32.

people who then bear witness and offer loving service to the world. It is unity of action rather than of meaning that should characterize our understanding of what we are, and do, as the church. Lathrop's alternative basis for ecclesiology intends to highlight the common ground for which ecumenical relationships can be made.

*Holy People* bears Lathrop's liturgical ecclesiology, and its implications, in three sections. In the first section, Lathrop traces the history of the assembly of God's people from the beginnings of Mount Sinai following the Hebrew exodus, through the formation of the New Testament church, to various expressions of liturgical assemblies throughout church history. Each local assembly participates in the assembly of the whole people of God in every age.

In the second section, Lathrop condenses from varied traditions of churches a common *ordo*, the core of what all traditions share as a common understanding and practice of what is done at baptism and the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. This common *ordo* provides for ecumenical unity, offering the basis for mutual appreciation, exchange, and growth among the traditions. This unity is "the common participation in Christ of a richly diverse body, not the ideological uniformity of a single idea, the organizational uniformity of a single organization, or even the emotional uniformity of a single feeling of 'fellowship.'" [108]

In the third section, Lathrop strives to offer insight from liturgy and the liturgical assembly for the relationship between church and culture. With a description of the origins of early church practice out of Jewish and Hellenistic ritual patterns, Lathrop

[108] *Ibid*., Location 1583.

reviews the ways theological traditions do assemble with baptism, use of scriptures, and eucharist within their own cultural contexts, including the examination of how aspects of culture have been used, altered, or rejected. Lathrop puts forward that the liturgical assembly bears a vocation for the practice of holiness, offering "an alternate way to see the world itself, in the light of God's mercy." [109] The culture of the local assembly is drawn into the holiness of Christ, and thus harmony with the whole assembly of God's people and participation in the totality of God's creation.

Lathrop contributes to this project in two ways. First, the unifying possibilities of Lathrop's liturgical ecclesiology contributes to the matters of diversity currently present in the Church of Reconciliation, as well as that produced by the incorporation of others in the expanding missional ministry of the Church. Most of all, Lathrop's ecclesiology describes the assembling of God's people – the liturgical assembly – as the means to understand the nature and life of the Church. He states, "This assembly's identity is manifest – it is what it is – when it does the central things of Christian faith. If you will, the church begins to know itself not by contemplating its own identity, but by beholding the face of Christ in that word, bath, and table that manifest God's identity." [110] In this regard, the assembly is the full life of the Church in a microcosmic experience.

The incorporation of the information provided in *Holy People* is limited by Lathrop's undeveloped articulation of the nature, purpose, and characteristics of church missions or God's mission for the church. The mission of the Church appears as nothing more than local churches remaining "in the midst of each culture, in loving and critical

[109] *Ibid*., Location 2606.

[110] *Ibid*., Location 162.

dialogue with that culture, with our culture." [111]

### *Being as Communion*, John Zizioulas

Through the concept of "communion," and rooted in the experience of the eucharist, Orthodox metropolitan and theologian John Zizioulas provides a systematic theology with consideration of the major theological topics in *Being as Communion*. Zizioulas argues that the Orthodox understanding of the Trinity as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as in communion with each other is crucial for theology, our understanding of the interaction of humanity, and the life of the Church in the world. As Zizioulas states, "Ecclesial being must never separate itself from the absolute demands of the being of God – that is, its eschatological nature – nor from history. The institutional dimension of the Church must always incarnate its eschatological nature without annulling the dialectic of this age and the age to come, the uncreated and the created, the being of God and that of man and the world." [112]

Zizioulas provides three sections for his theological work. The first begins with the historic development of personhood and personal identity, demonstrating the role of patristic theology in accounting for the unique, concrete personhood through understanding the identity of God not in God's substance, but God's Trinitarian existence in relation to the Son and Spirit. Zizioulas than carries forward the implications of the quest for freedom as the person seeks to move from biological existence, identified in Patristic terms (which can only result in death and the bounds of biological law), into ecclesial existence (existence unbound by biological necessity and without the sufferings

[111] *Ibid*., Location 2892.

[112] John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 20.

of createdness). Ecclesial existence and absolute freedom require a "new birth" and the setting of ontological existence to God's way of being. It is in the Eucharist that we are able to transcend the burdens of biological existence. The Eucharist "is first of all an assembly (*synaxis*), a community, a network of relations, in which man 'subsists' in a manner different from the biological as a member of a body which transcends every exclusiveness of a biological or social kind." [113]

In the second section, Zizioulas discusses the nature of reconciling "at one and the same time the nature of historical truth and presence of ultimate truth in the here and now" [114] through the Greek Patristic notion of communion with the Holy Trinity. The ancient understanding of the eucharist was both manifestation (historical) and the realization of the Church (ultimate). As Zizioulas states, "The Church did not live only by the memory of a historical fact but it accomplished an eschatalogical act. It was in the eucharist that the Church would contemplate her eschatalogical nature, would taste the very life of the Holy Trinity." [115]

In the final section, the work is rounded by consideration of the Church, its shape, ministry, and local expression due to the eucharist, as the "event constitutive of the being of the Church, enabling the Church to *be*." [116] This has implications for the institution of the Church. As the eucharist unites the work of Christ with the work of the Holy Spirit, the divine economy includes the historical continuity that is instituted and transmitted

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[113] Ibid., 60.

[114] *Ibid.*, 71.

[115] *Ibid.*, 21.

[116] *Ibid.*, 21.

(thus the ordering of the Church) as well as the dilation of history and time to share the enlivening of the Holy Spirit beyond the bounds of historical event or biological existence. Zizioulas concludes by discussing the challenges eucharistic ecclesiology presents in reconciling the local congregation in relationship to the universal church and expression of the church complete.

Zizioulas' theological work contributes to this project in two ways. First, Zizioulas' use of "communion" as more than sacramental notions or topics of liturgical theology, but theological foundation, points to a radical implication for the essentiality of mission for the identification of the Church. Zizioulas states, "The substance of God, 'God,' has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion."[117] Then the hypostasis, fundamental reality, of the Church cannot be articulated apart from communion. Communion therefore articulates the substance of the Church as that which is in relation to God, as well as to the gathered community. However, the nature of communion indicates that comprehension of the full substance of the Church further requires the Church's relation with the historical biological world. The substance and identity of the Church cannot be understood absent Mission. Zizioulas points us in this direction when he states, "the Church's 'ontology' becomes conditioned existentially through her ministry."[118]

Second, Zizioulas describes the eucharist as the means and experience by which ministry, and the vocational lives of God's people, are initiated. He states,

It is the eucharist, understood properly as a community and not as a "thing," that

[117] *Ibid.*, 17.

[118] *Ibid.*, 224.

> Christ is present here and now as the one who realizes God's self-communication to creation as communion with His life, and in the existential form of a concrete community created by the Spirit. Thus the eucharistic assembly becomes, theologically speaking, the natural milieu for the birth of ministry understood in this broader soteriological perspective. [119]

While the ministry and the individuals of the Church occur in a concrete event or point in history, they both originate and share in a much larger communion of being and action.

The weakness of Zizioulas' contribution in *Being as Communion* to this project is the notion and development of the mission of the Church. The mission of the Church for Zizioulas is limited to identification as ministry *ad extra* (toward the outside) in an incarnational method. [120] The development of mission not only relies on origination within the eucharistic community, but is limited to "go necessarily through the hands of its president (bishop)." [121]

### ***A Ministry Shaped by Mission*, Paul Avis**

In *A Ministry Shaped by Mission,* Anglican priest, theologian, and ecumenist Paul Avis focuses on the overall theme of "the mission of God that shapes our ministry." [122] With the tradition and ministry of the Church of England acting as context, the work strives to focus on the direct relationship of the mission of God and the ministry of the Church. For this work, he asserts a practical theology for ministry and ordination in light of the missiological concept of *missio Dei*.

*A Ministry Shaped by Mission* comprises three extended chapters beginning with

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[119] *Ibid.*, 213-214.

[120] *Ibid.*, 224.

[121] *Ibid.*, 225.

[122] Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission*, xii.

a presentation of the *missio Dei* "that is entrusted to the Church in the form of a triple ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral responsibility." [123] In Chapter 2, Avis provides a discussion of the nature of ministry with a pointed differentiation between ordered ministries and "straightforward Christian discipleship." [124] The missionary thrust for the ordained ministry is framed upon the New Testament model of *διακονία*. The final chapter investigates the ordering of the Church's ministry, articulating the nature of Holy Orders, and then possible reforms and developments to the understanding of ministry in the Church.

Avis contributes a starting point to define "mission" in consideration of Anglican theological and ecclesiological terms. Building on the work of David Bosch, Avis defines the mission of the Church as "the whole Church bringing the whole Christ to the whole world." For this the mission of the Church comprises three primary tasks – word, sacraments, and pastoral care. However, Avis's missiological inspiration is limited. The "missional" nature of the sacraments comes in a function of an "act of witness and evangelism" [125] and "public demonstration of Christ's death and resurrection." [126]

Avis does contribute a reformative word on the nature of ministry of the Church as "representative of Christ and his Church." [127] This representative nature of ministry begins to restore the ministry of the Church, and the ordained orders of the Church, to a

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[123] *Ibid.*, xv.

[124] *Ibid.*, xv.

[125] *Ibid.*, 28.

[126] *Ibid.*, 29.

[127] *Ibid.*, 70.

disposition for mission and participation in the *missio Dei* known through the redeeming work of Christ. As Avis states, "The ministry of the Church must be modelled christologically. As Christ is representative of both God and his people, so is the Christian ministry." [128] The case for missional quality of representation also highlights Avis' call for a restoration of the full theological underpinnings for the three ordained orders of ministry, particularly the diaconate. The principle of representation brings an iconic function because, "Each order, as an ecclesial sign, proclaims something of the nature of his body and points to the mission of God that calls the Church into being and gives it its purpose." [129]

Avis's contributions are limited by the narrow influence afforded to mission. Avis limits mission to the public and external aspect to the tasks of the Church. The primacy of christology to inform the understanding of *missio Dei* indicates the need for the theological discussion developed since the publication of *A Ministry Shaped by Mission*.[130]

### ***People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity*, Dwight J. Zscheile**

In *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity*, Episcopal priest and professor Dwight Zscheile asserts that communities and leaders of the Episcopal Church need to recover the more mission-directed gifts that lie within the tradition's identity. This recovery of self-identity, precipitated by a very different cultural and societal setting

[128] *Ibid.*, 73.

[129] *Ibid.*, 120.

[130] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective* (Grad Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 13.

than that of the Church's establishment, involves theological, ecclesial, and practical exploration of the nature and mission of the Trinity. And thus, "The shape of God's communal life with and for the world must define the shape of the church's life with and for the world in God's image." [131] Zscheile aims to engage the Church in re-envisioning what it means to be a contemporary Anglican in the United States, challenging the people of the Church to build new relationships within their local contexts.

*People of the Way* presents Zscheile's argument in three sections. First he traces through chapters 1 and 2 the historical movement of the Episcopal Church from the establishment (or national church) patterns of the sixteenth century to the apostolic realities of a very different cultural setting. Zscheile identifies the lingering notions of establishment thinking regarding the nature and mission of the Episcopal Church even though American culture does not validate this position.

Preceding the final section of suggestions for the adaptation of church structure for mission, Chapters 3-6 of the second section identify "the core story of [the Episcopal] tradition" which can be carried forward to mark future identity and ministry of the church. Beginning with reflection upon the eucharist, Zscheile highlights key theological themes in the liturgical practice that nurture an ecclesial life rooted in the very being of God and the outpouring of God's love into the world. Next, he examines the understanding that members are incorporated by the community of faith to offer and proclaim a manifestation to God's creation of life in reconciliation with God and the rest of creation. Then hospitality is presented not only as a practice in which the church can

[131] Dwight J. Zscheile, *People of the Way,* Location 2022.

welcome, but also the experience for contemporary Christians to live as strangers to the wider society unfamiliar with Christian faith. Finally, Zscheile focuses on unique contributions to the missional church found in the Anglican tradition. He specifically highlights the church's liturgy; the concrete ways congregations and diocese respond to cultural and social changes; and the missional questions found as part of the baptismal liturgy in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Zscheile contributes three specific points to this project. First, his work places the contextual realities for Church of Reconciliation within the larger experience of the Episcopal Church. His identification of the larger scale for the missional dilemma and challenge of Episcopal communities indicates the timeliness of the work done by Reconciliation and considerations of this project. Second, Zscheile articulates a more robust Trinitarian basis for the mission of the Church. With the application of the theological concept *perichoresis*,[132] the mission of the Church regains pneumatological dimensions. In this regard, mission is not only *imitatio Christi*, but the communal love of the Trinity. Finally, Zscheile identifies the primacy of the eucharistic experience for the Church in discovering its existence as "a product of and participant in God's mission or love for the world."[133]

## Conclusion

The literature reviewed spans a great diversity of sources and consideration; however this diversity provides for the unity and synergy for the reflections and work to follow. Through the work of Smith, we can appreciate the phenomenological reality of

[132] *Ibid.,* Location 872.

[133] *Ibid.*, Location 978.

liturgical practice in drawing the Church into the heart and desires of God. Weil further isolates the formative realities specific to the eucharist. The work of Zizioulas and Lathrop demonstrates that the formative nature of the eucharist reaches farther than the individual participant, but grounds the Church's very nature, character, and relationship with God in the eucharist. Avis and Zscheile articulate a clear character or quality for mission within the Anglican tradition and Episcopal Church. Further, their work speaks to the nature of God as externally directed and attuned, the *Missio Dei*.

# CHAPTER THREE

# THEOLOGY OF NEW MINISTRY

Building upon the considerations of the previous chapter, this chapter provides the theological connection between missional praxis and eucharistic liturgical theology, resulting in the formative realities of eucharistic liturgy. Beginning with a brief description of Anglican eucharistic theology, the relationship of missional praxis and eucharistic liturgical theology then builds on the Pauline understanding[134] of the Lord's Supper as primal to formation of identity and purpose for Christians. Additionally, exegetical focus on the Lukan use of ανάμνησις demonstrates the orientation of this formation to praxis extended from the nature of God. Finally, the chapter discusses missional praxis provided in the eucharistic liturgy because the eucharist embodies the experience of God's initiative and action through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the embodiment of the experience of Christ, life in Communion, and the fulfillment of God's redemption, the eucharist provides the first manner for the Church to experience and join the *missio Dei* of God.

[134] All biblical citations, quotations, and references are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version.*

## Anglican Eucharistic Liturgical Theology

Three essential theological themes emerge amid the various forms for the eucharistic rite of the Episcopal Church. At the present moment, Episcopal congregations have the availability of no less than 12 authorized forms for the eucharistic rite.[135] The various rites for eucharistic liturgy in the Episcopal Church maintain a consistent anatomy resulting from the three influences of basic materials drawn directly from ancient liturgies, materials from Anglican historical antecedents, and modifications according to contemporary idiom.[136] This seven-part anatomy[137] provides the structure for the three theological functions with inherent Trinitarian basis; for this discussion these functions are defined specifically as the incorporation of the assembly into communion with God, the participation of the assembly in Christ's redemption and grace, and the activation in the Holy Spirit within the assembly.

The nature of eucharistic practice initiates the theological function of incorporation of the assembly into communion with God. In describing liturgical practice within sacramental theology, Edward Kilmartin describes the first by placing the eucharist within the sacramental economy of God, the unfolding of the *telos* and the

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[135] *The Book of Common Prayer* and *Enriching Our Worship 1*, the two authorized resources for use within the Episcopal Church, provide respectively seven and five liturgical forms for the eucharistic rite.

[136] R.T. Beckwith, "The Prayer Book After Cramner," in *The Study of Liturgy*, edited by Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Eward Yarnold SJ, and Paul Bradshaw (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 109.

[137] These elements are the gathering in the Lord's Name, the proclamation and response to the Word of God, prayer for the World and the Church, the exchange of the Peace, the preparation of the Table with the offered gifts, the making of the eucharist (prayers of giving thanks with Christ's institutionary words), and the sharing of the gifts. *The Book of Common Prayer*, 400-401.

movement of salvation history leading to a mutuality.[138] Kilmartin states,

> In brief, the created reality of the world, despite being deformed because of the sinful tendencies of humankind, is capable of service as medium of God's self-communication on the ground of the goodness of God. The sacraments are the most important way of mutual exchange between God and believers, a *sacrum commercium*.[139]

The civic nature of assembly and common action conjured by Greek etymology for the word liturgy[140] highlights the second means of assemblage of the eucharist. As previously noted in reflection on the works of Lathrop, the eucharist gathers diverse peoples into a common identity through common purpose and action of the liturgy.[141] The assemblage in the eucharist is distinct from other gatherings in that we are brought into a "network of relations, in which man 'subsists' in a manner different from the biological as a member of a body which transcends every exclusiveness of a biological kind."[142] The different manner becomes a relationship with God that does more than influence thoughts, intentions, or deeds, but transforms the very underlying substance of life. This is the nature of communion with God, Zizioulas explicates in stating, "If communion is

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[138] Edward Kilmartin, *Christian Liturgy, I. Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1988), 201.

[139] *Ibid.,* 206.

[140] "'Liturgy' comes from the Greek word *leitourgia*….In the earliest Greek inscriptions, the term has a civic context, in which it is used to refer to the direct discharge of specific services to the body politic. These services, whether voluntary or compulsory, were offered at their own expense by all citizens with an income above a level fixed in law. An additional context is its cultic use. Here, the idea is not that one can render service to the nation through the *cultus*. Rather, the service that is provided is to the gods themselves. The development of the term in Judaic and Christian contexts gives it a considerably greater depth of meaning. In the Septuagint, the Greek term to translate the Hebrew is used in cultic contexts with only a few exceptions, and never in the civic context of the earlier Greek usage." Nicholas A. Jesson, *Lex orandi, lex credendi: Towards a Liturgical Theology* (Toronto: University of St. Michael's College, 2001), 2.

[141] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy People,* Location 2616.

[142] John Zizioulas, *Being Communion,* 60.

conceived as something additional to being, then we no longer have the same picture. The crucial point lies in the fact that being is constituted as communion."[143] The alternative and transformative means of assembly occurs through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the eucharist is known "the mystery, the plan he was pleased to decree in Christ, to be carried out in the fullness of time" (Eph 1:9-10a). Further, Jesus Christ came "and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God." (Jn 11:52).

Eucharistic gathering goes further by calling the assembly to participation in the very redemption and grace of Jesus Christ. As *The Book of Common Prayer* states in the eucharistic *Exhortation,*[144]

> Beloved in the Lord: Our Savior Christ, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood as a sign and pledge of his love, for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of his death, and for a spiritual sharing in his risen life. For in these holy Mysteries we are made one with Christ, and Christ with us; we are made one body in him, and members one of another.[145]

The physical and material qualities of eucharist practice provide the point in which "the historical embodies the metaphysical, and presents the deep mysteries of Eternal Life to

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[143] *Ibid*., *101*.

[144] An earnest public admonishment printed in *The Book of Common Prayer*. The prayerbook allows the exhortation to be used in whole or in part during the liturgy or at other times. The exhortation recalls the institution of the eucharist and its benefits for a spiritual sharing in Christ's risen life and for making us one with Christ and members one of another. It also gives thanks to God for the creation of the world, for God's continual providence and love for us, for the Incarnation and our redemption through Christ, who died to "make us the children of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and exalt us to everlasting life." As a public spiritual direction, the exhortation calls on the people to make a worthy approach to the eucharist, including examination of their lives and conduct. Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, eds., *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church: A User Friendly Reference for Episcopalians*, 214.

[145] *The Book of Common Prayer*, 316.

us in a way that we can apprehend."[146] Set within the unique rhythm and setting of the eucharist, the material elements of the world give shape to the divine and holy presence and work of God in Jesus Christ. For this reason, the outline of faith set forth in *The Book of Common Prayer* defines the function of sacrament in the following way: "outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace."[147] This corporeal transformation can be seen in relevance in the eucharistic elements understood as the flesh and blood of Christ offered and intended in his scriptural institution.[148] More than the elements, the assembly gathered embodies the corporeal presence of Christ. As Kilmartin states, "Hence the Church can be called a 'comprehensive sacrament' because of its unity with Christ….Consequently Christ's saving work, his life, death, and glorification, are always present and effective in the essential activity of his Body, the Church."[149] In the eucharist this assembly shares more than a taste of bread and wine. As the Anglican/ Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission stated of the eucharist, "its purpose is to transmit the life of the crucified and risen Christ to his body, the church, so that its members may be more fully united with Christ and with one another."[150] Therefore, in the eucharist the Church shares in very redemptive action and results of Jesus Christ.

Participation in the redemption and grace of Christ results not only from his

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[146] Evelyn Underhill, *Worship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989), 16.

[147] *The Book of Common Prayer*, 857.

[148] Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-23; Luke 22:19-20.

[149] Edward Kilmartin, *Christian Liturgy, I. Theology,* 105.

[150] Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission, "Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine" in *The Final Report, Windsor, September 1981* (London: SPCK, 1982), 12.

historical death and resurrection but the activation in the Holy Spirit. The eucharistic invocation and presence of God's Spirit provides the means for the Church to assume the actualized life as the Body of Christ. As Zizioulas states, "The Spirit is not something that 'animates' a Church which already somehow exists. The Spirit makes the Church *be*. Pneumatology does not refer to the well being but the very being of the Church."[151] The pneumatological activation of the Church leads to more than a situational transformation limited to the confines of the eucharistic practice and locale. The new way of being within the eucharist animates this existence beyond the eucharist. As the World Council of Churches stated, "As it is entirely the gift of God, the eucharist brings into the present age a new reality which transforms Christians into the image of Christ, and therefore makes them his effective witnesses…the eucharistic assembly must be concerned for gathering also those who are at present beyond its visible limits."[152]

Considering essential theological themes borne within eucharistic liturgical practice can relegate eucharistic liturgy to nothing more than a vehicle or vessel conveying a body of theological information. As Louis Weil states,

> What we do in a particular liturgy must come from within— not some decorative element that we apply from the outside. The heart of authentic liturgy is always the inner reality of faith embodied, using fragile human forms that are our stewardship of the gifts of grace. It is in this sense that we may speak of the liturgy as "performative." The act does what it says. Too great a preoccupation with ritual details can erode the inner integrity of the rite as sacramental act and, in the experience of the people gathered, can put the primary emphasis in the wrong place.[153]

Within the eucharist, the Church not only receives these essential Trinitarian

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[151] John Zizioulas, *Being Communion,* 132.

[152] World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 15.

[153] Louis Weil, *Liturgical Sense*, Location 1511.

theological themes but experiences and partakes of the enactment of the themes. Taken with consideration of the phenomenological, anthropological, and biblical insights into the roles of ritual and the gathering of community, this work will articulate how eucharistic liturgical practice transforms the people of the Church. Even more so, the eucharist transforms the very identity and nature of the Church as expression of the *missio Dei* of God.

## Phenomenology of Eucharistic Liturgical Practice

As the phenomenological work of James K.A. Smith highlights, liturgy creates a specific structured experience, which does far more than convey theological ideas. Liturgy can give rise to values and action.[154] As an alternative anthropology to the centrality of the intellectual for action, Smith locates the primacy of love and priority of imagination in shaping identity, orientation to the world, and action.[155] Smith proposes the possibility of liturgy as a means for more significant formation of Christians than pedagogical systems of intellectual development. He states, "We should be increasingly attentive to the formative role of environment and practice in shaping our desires while also recognizing our habitual orientation to the world that undergirds so much of our action."[156] This paradigm relies on the work of Pierre Bourdieu in the study of how human beings develop patterns of attitude or *habitus*.[157] *Habitus* results from the communal and external aspects of a structured and institutional practice that conditions

[154] James K.A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom,* location 391.

[155] *Ibid.,* location 421.

[156] *Ibid*., location 453.

[157] *Ibid*., location 652.

and modifies the individual's constitution in the world and allows the incorporation of the institution's principles by the individual.[158] Bourdieu's *habitus*, habituated inclinations that spawn meaningful action,[159] informs a new conceptualization of liturgical practice and formation of the individual for Smith.

Eucharistic liturgy becomes an exemplar of the embodying structure for the development of a new *habitus*. More than a body of cultural, social, or intellectual information, *habitus* encompasses inclinations, dispositions, actions, and practices of a community; as Smith states, "habit is the embodied know-how that is carried in a community." [160] As Juan Oliver summarizes,

> Worship forms the whole person, attitudinally and not only intellectually, by rehearsing our selves, our souls, and our bodies through verbal and nonverbal means, engaging us in a semblance of the Reign of God. This takes places without worship telling us what it is doing, nor how, but rather presenting these behaviors as "the way things ought to be."[161]

These notions are made plain in the Apostle Paul's etiology regarding eucharistic practice to the Corinthian church.[162] Through Paul's exhortations for observance of the Lord's Supper, he shifts the letter's focus from social and cultural matters of behavior and attitudes toward understanding the reality of the life and ministry of the Church as the Body of Christ. Providing one of the earliest surviving written sources for the Church, Paul offers perspective from the early Church's clear understanding of the essential act

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[158] *Ibid*., location 1860.

[159] *Ibid*., location 1818.

[160] *Ibid*., location 1812.

[161] Juan Oliver, "Worship, Forming, and Deforming," in *Worship-Shaped Life*, ed. Ruth Meyers and Paul Gibson (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010), 8.

[162] 1 Corinthians 11:23-34.

and practice which shape, form, and self-identify us as the people of God through Jesus Christ. Paul describes the Lord's Supper as an experience fused with the holy, an encounter of the realities of Christ, and the foundation from which to discern one's own behavior.

Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 11:28-29[163] highlight the *habitus*-forming nature of the eucharist. With the postpositive conjunction, δέ, Paul introduces an alternative way forward for the Corinthians. Paul shifts in this alternative from subjunctive possible conditions and consequences to present, imperative, and immediate actions: δοκιμάζω (to prove, to put to proof, to examine), ἐσθίω (eat), and πίνω (drink). Paul moves from possibilities and probabilities of consequences to certitude of action. This change in mood communicates concrete and immediate invitation to actions that will be on-going and continuous. The examination, eating, and drinking are not one-time occurrences.

In the New Testament, the cognate group of δοκιμάζω (examination) captures a unique view of the situation of Christians. Within the eschatological possibilities of salvation or judgment, δοκιμάζω evokes the work of attestation.[164] This attestation "tests" by comparison and relation to the ideal or measure. Paul calls for such testing of Christians in relation to their "works" (Gal. 6:4) and to faith (2 Cor. 13:5).[165] Each person must examine themselves, holding the reality attitudes, motivations, and intent for

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[163] Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. [29]For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.

[164] Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman Publishing Company, 1985), 182.

[165] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman Publishing Company, 1987), 561.

participation in the Lord's Supper in light of those expected.

Paul's corrective is not for the formula of the Lord's Supper, but the substance. He bids the Corinthians eat and drink διακρίνων (discerning) τὸ σῶμα (the body). The centrality of σῶμα for the entire epistle is not for Paul's prolific and varied application of the word, but its importance is for this overarching call to the Corinthians to share life united as a new type of community, offering to the world the very real expression of the resurrected Lord Jesus. In 1 Cor. 11:29, σῶμα bridges the body imagery of unity experienced in the eucharistic gathering (1 Cor. 10:17) to the image of corporeal σῶμα of the risen Lord known in the gathered life of the church (1 Cor. 12:12-26). The σῶμα of this table is the Lord's, known in the bread and in one another in the community united by that bread.

The necessity for full and meaningful participation in the Lord's Supper is the διακρίνων of this presence of this σῶμα. The verb διακρίνω compounds the preposition διά (denoting separation) with the verb κρίνω (distinguish, judge, separate throughout).[166] The action prescribed distinguishes σῶμα as different, distinct, and clearly separate. Set with Paul's previous comments in the epistle, the Corinthians must see that this Lord's Supper is not just any other honorary meal, the church is not just another voluntary association, and behaviors do matter. The failure to make, and maintain, these distinctions will provoke judgment (πίνων κρίμα) instead.

In verse 30[167], Paul considers that the spiritual consequences of life which has

[166] Spiros Zodhiastes, ed. *The Complete Word Study Bible* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, Inc., 1992), 431.

[167] "For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died."

been set aside or judged by God will affect physical and temporal life as well. The demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο refers to this judgment. The preposition δία designates the accusative τοῦτο (this judgment) as the cause or instigation (because of this)[168] for the physical maladies to be described. Paul associates physical infirmity as the product of inappropriate behavior within the eucharistic setting. However, these very real consequences are not limited to just the offenders. The actions of a few affect the community as a whole.[169] While only a few individuals (the ἕκαστος of v. 21) have created divisions within the gathered body of Christ as the Church, many (πολλοὶ and ἱκανοί) have been adversely affected.

The epistle bears a final indication of the formative realities of the eucharistic feast in verse 32.[170] The post-positive δέ initiates a condition of contrast. In this contrast, the subjects *are* in the state and condition of "being judged" (κρινόμενοι). Unlike the possibility of self-examination without judgment, here the genitive (κυρίου) following the preposition (ὑπὸ) denotes agency[171] for the definite action. The passive voice of the participle κρινόμενοι makes clear imposition of the judgment. Paul leaves no doubt of who is the true agent of "the Lord."

Paul considers this possibility and hope in the judgment of the Lord as the context for discipline. This παιδευόμεθα (passive voice of παιδεύω) is distinct from the possible

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[168] Murray Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 72.

[169] Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 565.

[170] "But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world."

[171] Murray Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament,* 220.

condemnation (κατακριθῶμεν, note the aorist subjunctive) Paul identifies. The New Testament uses other words to describe the consequences of judgment, such as κολάζω (to maim, Acts 4:21), τύπτω (to strike, Mt. 24:49), or ταρταρόω (to cast into hell, 2 Ptr. 2:4).

For Greeks and Jews, παιδεύω held specific connotations. In the Greek world, παιδεύω related to the upbringing and education of children. Children needed direction, teaching, instruction, and discipline. The Greco-Roman work of παιδεύω prepared a man for mature participation in all affairs of society and culture. In non-biblical Greek, the word was not used in association with corporal punishment.[172] For the Jew, the translation of the LXX applied παιδεύω to experiences, expressions (the Law), and individuals (prophets) presented by God to nurture holiness. Even suffering provided παιδεύω. Regardless of the form, Jews understood God as ultimate source of παιδεύω with an expected future of life and bliss.[173]

Together, the two perspectives of παιδεύω cast a clear understanding for the purpose and result of discipline. Through παιδεύω, individuals are prepared for their life in the community. This *disciplined* life included active participation according to the base values. The disciplined life comes by the inspiration and standards of God. Finally, παιδεύω provided for a preferred and hopeful future.

The observance of the Lord's Supper, "the gathering to eat," entails more than a dinner party or Christian devotion and fellowship. Paul comprehends the gathering for the Lord's Supper as a public declaration of God's redemptive and restorative fulfillment

[172] Geoffrey Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* 753-4.

[173] *Ibid.*, 754-8.

through the death of Jesus. With Jesus' death and resurrection, people held in bondage and slavery find freedom. The powers and adversaries who endeavored to put Jesus on the cross and in the tomb failed. Lathrop provides direction for this concern with a lyric quality:

> But the practice of the assembly....does not exist, in the first place, in order to be in dialogue with cultures. It exists to tell the truth of God. And the practices of holiness, the acts whereby the assembly bears witness to the truth of God...is not purity and arrogant distance but unity with all the needy of the world. The Christian faith trusts that the very signs at the heart of the assembly...are gifts of God which communicate that holiness as an alternative vision of the world, a symbolic reorientation in all that is concretely real.[174]

And through sacred remembrance – ἀνάμνησις – we personally share in the fullness of the nature and activity of God in Jesus Christ.

**Sacramental Ontological Formation as the Church**

With the actions' purpose stated, ἀνάμνησις, the narrative shared by the Gospel of Luke moves the Lord's Supper fully away from contemporaneous cultic or dining rituals. Beyond Luke's narrative and Paul's etiology of the Lord's Supper, ἀνάμνησις is used only five times in the LXX and then only one other use in the New Testament (Heb. 10:3).[175] As a cognate from the combination of the preposition ἀνά ("up, completing a process") and the verb μιμνήσκω ("turn the mind towards"), ἀνάμνησις bears a distinction from its root and related cognates.

The verbal root, μιμνήσκω ("to remember/ recollect"), captures more than simple mental activity. In the Old Testament, "memory" and "activity" come together as we see

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[174] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy People*, Location 2882.

[175] Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians, Vol. 7* in *Sacra Pagina Series* (Collegeville, PA: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 428.

that God "remembers" and "visits" or "forgives." Likewise, Israel remembers while erecting a memorial monument or observing a ceremonial rite.[176] In fact, it is used only in the New Testament through the middle voice, μιμνήσκομαι, demonstrating the high level of personal involvement, interest, and dedication motivating this remembering.[177] "Remembering" in the New Testament leads to salvation for the dying thief (Lk 24:6, 8), is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26), or comes forth in faithful practices (1 Cor 11:2). The prefix ἀνά intensifies and orients memorial and recollection, action already understood with the combination of contemplation and intentional action.

Ancient Greeks were familiar with ἀνάμνησις within epistemological discourse and cultural practice. Illustrated by Plato in *Meno* and *Phaedo,* ἀνάμνησις is the process to connect with the source of knowledge known by the soul, ahistorical, and distinct from the material world. The manner in which ἀνάμνησις was used philosophically by ancient Greeks points to the intensity of recollection expected. Hellenistic religious and voluntary associations undertook ἀνάμνησις through meals gathered in memory of founders or patrons expressing a form of hero worship.[178] These practices account for the Hellenistic acceptance of the practice of the Lord's Supper introduced by Paul to the Corinthians, as well as the need for the corrective etiology of 1 Corinthians 11.

Paul's etiology of the Lord's Supper holds the ἀνάμνησις with a particular emphasis, contributing to the Lukan narrative tradition of the Last Supper, and marked by

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[176] Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle of the Corinthians,* 553.

[177] Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Bible*, 155.

[178] Folke T. Olofsson, "All this in Remembrance: The History & Revelation of Anamnesis in Platonic, Jewish & Christian Thought," *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, Vol. 26 Issue 2 (Mar/Apr 2013), 28.

a distinct Jewish practice of sacred remembrance.[179] Judaism is, among many other things, a religion of memory. The practice of sacred remembrance, זכר (*zakhor*), noted in Hebrew Scriptures occurs either by God towards humanity or sacrificially by a person making an offering before God, thus bringing the offerer into favorable remembrance by God. *Zakhor* fuels the covenantal relationship between God and God's people.[180] God's *zakhor* reminds God-self of earlier saving acts in and through new acts of liberation (e.g. Gen. 8:1; 9:15-16; 19:29; 30:22; Ex. 2:24). Jewish observance of *zakhor* refers to something given or done in time and space, which is the point of reference and contact between man and the Absolute, between humanity and God.[181] Jewish practice of *zakhor* is a return to the past with an eye to action in the present. By actively observing the moments of sacred history through the liturgical cycle, Jews acknowledge the continued saving power of God. This practice of sacred remembrance becomes clearly visible in the celebration of Passover.[182] Instructions for the Passover observance explicitly state, "In every generation, each must see himself as if he went forth from Egypt."[183]

Within the observance of the Lord's Supper, the memorial telic then is not recalling a past moment or celebrating a fallen hero. The remembering involved in ἀνάμνησις brings the observant and community into connection with cosmic and divine

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[179] Luke T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 338.

[180] Martin Kavka, "Recollection, Zakhor, Anamnesis: In Ira Stone's *Reading Levinas/ Reading Talmud*," *Cross Currents,* Vol. 49 Issue 4 (Winter1999/2000): 523-24.

[181] Folke T. Olofsson, 29.

[182] Martin Kavka, 523-24.

[183] Goldwurm, Hersh, trans. *Yad Avraham Mishnah Series:11 Tractates Pesachim, Shekalim (Seder Moed 2).* (New York: ArtScroll Mesorah Publications, 1981), 10:5.

currents. In this regard, Louis Weil notes the words of liturgical theologian Gregory Dix who states:

> At the heart of it all is the eucharistic action, a thing of an absolute simplicity—the taking, blessing, breaking and giving of bread and the taking, blessing and giving of a cup of wine and water, as these were first done with their new meaning by a young Jew before and after supper with His friends on the night before He died.…He had told his friends to do this henceforward with the new meaning "for the anamnesis" of Him, and they have done it always since.[184]

The personal intensity of ἀνάμνησις bears one into a moment of the past, while bringing the work and grace of God into the present.

As the archetype for the life of the Church, the schema of the Lord's Supper applies beyond the sphere of liturgical practice. The principle of ἀνάμνησις encapsulates the critical formative work of the Lord's Supper. But how can ἀνάμνησις provide spiritual praxis and discipline beyond the liturgical setting? By expanding the scope in which we apply ἀνάμνησις, the Church develops a holistic, Christ-oriented identity for the public witness of the Church.

In ἀνάμνησις, our present lives are woven into the fabric of the historical passion and resurrection of Christ. Through ἀναμιμνήσκω (the act of sacred remembrance) of the Lord's Supper, ordinary materials, an ordinary gathering, and ordinary individuals became experiences and expressions of the holy. Just as the participant of the Lord's Supper, through ἀνάμνησις, must recognize the presence of and participation in Christ's body, so too ἀνάμνησις cannot be limited to the ritual table and actions. Christ's hypostatic union extends into the realm of history. The history of this world is sanctified,

[184] Louis Weil, *Liturgical Sense*, Location 1505.

included in the absolute and gratuitous presence of Christ.[185] In the liturgical practice of the eucharist there is union of time and presence to shape lives and perspectives. The eucharist takes place "in the subjunctive mode (we worship 'as if' we were in the Reign of God)."[186]

> What we've just done in worship is both a rehearsal of the entire history of the world and a rehearsal for kingdom come. The end of Christian worship brings us back to the beginning of creation, to our commissioning in the Garden and our deputizing as God's image-bearers, those responsible for tending and tilling God's good—but now broken— creation.[187]

Thus the sacred remembrance of ἀνάμνησις provides the critical lens to understand our lives and actions. Smith describes this paradigm in the motivation for individual and personal emerging from our loves and desires.[188] By ἀνάμνησις we find the desire of God because the Church is exposed to, and experiences, the incarnate presence and work of God. Through immersion in the incarnate presence of God in ἀνάμνησις, the Church encounters the nature and desire of God. Joseph Ratzinger articulates the divine desire as quickening of the hearts of the Church in this way:

> The Eucharist…tells us...that God gives himself to us so that we, in turn, can give ourselves. The initiative in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ comes from God. In the beginning, it was he himself who lowered himself….The more we enter into the night of the misunderstood mystery the more we trust him, the more we find him, the more we discover the love and freedom that sustain us through all the nights. God gives so that we can give. This is the essence of the eucharistic sacrifice, of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.[189]

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[185] Elizabeth Tillar, "Critical Remembrance and Eschatological Hope in Edward Schillebeeckx's Theology of Suffering for Others," *Heythrop Journal*, Vol. XLIV (2003), 19.

[186] Juan Oliver, "Worship, Forming, and Deforming", 13.

[187] James K.A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom,* Location 309.

[188] *Ibid.,* location 343.

[189] Joseph Ratzinger, "Cardinal Ratzinger on the Meaning of the Eucharist 'God Gives Himself to

**Mission Comes from the Nature of God Known First in the Eucharist**

As eucharistic liturgical practice embodies the fullness of Christ, and therefore the nature of God, the Church receives the nature of God in the eucharist. As the Gospel of Luke relates from Jesus' companions on the road to Emmaus, "Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread."[190] Zscheile articulates this participation in the nature of God,

> The church is a product of and participant in God's mission or love for the world. It exists to embody, in the tangible form of its communal life and through its relational witness, the good news announced by Jesus. God's presence and love are by no means restricted to the church, yet the church holds the interpretive key to them as the body of Christ.[191]

The essential nature demonstrated by God's action in Jesus Christ turns outward and moves externally, the *missio Dei* of God. As Ruth Ann Meyers states,

> Understanding mission as the mission of God places it in the sphere of Trinitarian theology [which] emphasize[s] a dynamic understanding of the Trinity. God's nature as a Trinitarian communion of persons is known in the sending of the Son and sending of the Spirit. In Jesus Christ and in the Spirit, Christians experience God's saving action – God's love for the world – and the church is drawn into saving action.[192]

Bearing in mind the nature of God provides fuller understanding for the praxis of the Church. As Van Gelder and Zscheile note, historically the activity and expression of the Church have lacked attention to the reality of God's nature of being and agency,

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Us,'" *Zenit News*, April 8, 2003 (http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/cardinal-ratzinger-on-the-meaning-of-the-eucharist, accessed July 2, 2014).

[190] Luke 24:35.

[191] Dwight Zscheile, *People of the Way*, Location 977.

[192] Ruth Ann Meyers, "Missional Church, Missional Liturgy," *Theology Today*, 67: 1 (April 2010): 36-50, 41.

focusing on what the Church does rather than what the Church is.[193] If the nature of God emerges from the *missio Dei* of God, then the praxis of the Church would be likewise identifiable. It is for this reason that an expression of missional praxis seeks to provide the essential nature of God more than programmatic actions or organization. As the ministry of the Church is an outworking of the acts of redemption that God accomplishes in Jesus Christ, the Church provides substance and articulation for the very redemption and life given by Christ. Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church demonstrates that as the Church becomes "ambassadors of Christ," and God empowers such activity through the *missio Dei*.[194]

The connection of missional praxis and the nature of God therefore correlates with the significance and formation of eucharistic praxis. As the eucharistic liturgical practice provides formation in the nature of God, and the nature of God is known as the *missio Dei*, then eucharistic praxis provides formation for missional praxis. As Smith summarizes,

> The culmination of Christian worship is its s/ending. In this time of already-not yet, the end and goal and *telos* of worship is being sent from this transformational encounter as God's witnesses and image-bearers. Christian worship is not some religious silo for our private refueling that replenishes our "inner" life.[195]

In the eucharistic liturgical practice, the Church receives not just the inward spiritual graces of "the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our union with Christ and one another, and the foretaste of the heavenly banquet which is our nourishment in eternal

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[193] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 9.

[194] 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

[195] James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom,* Location 309.

life,"[196] but the very formation for activity in the world.

## Conclusion

The threefold action upon the eucharistic assembly provides far more than cultic experience or ceremonial action. The very nature of eucharistic practice and participation incorporates the assembly, the Church into communion with, participation in, and activation by God. As eucharistic practice develops *habitus*, or new values and actions, as identified by phenomenological research, we are incorporated into a communion with God and one another. This reality of eucharistic practice resonates with the etiological statements of the apostle Paul in the first letter to Corinthians. The biblical mandates, found in the Lukan and Pauline descriptions, for eucharistic practice to bear ἀνάμνησις articulates a process and experience beyond simple cognitive recollection or ritual memorial. Instead, through eucharistic practice the assembly participates in the very actions and work of Christ. Therefore the incorporation and participation of the eucharistic forms empowers the Church into the very nature of God. At the very center, eucharistic practice is formative. Through eucharistic practice the assembled people are shaped for, and share in, the very life and nature of God.

[196] *The Book of Common Prayer*, 859.

# PART THREE

# PRACTICE

# CHAPTER FOUR

# GOALS AND PLANS

This chapter develops the formation program and ministry plan to introduce lay members to the formative realities of eucharistic liturgy for missional praxis. The ministry plan involves an eight-session program of action-reflection learning in a small group discovering eucharistic liturgy as core communal practice of formation for missional praxis. The action-reflection process incorporates the target group as a community of practice deployed for the design of indigenous liturgical expression, which expresses the congregation's missional praxis.

## Theological Implications

The development of missional praxis from the formative realities of eucharistic liturgical praxis bears significant theological implications for the Church. Noteworthy to this development is the incorporation of social science, organizational theory, systematic theology, and biblical exegesis. Rather than basing the development and implications within insulated ecclesial notions, the broad basis for development illustrates a depth of significance. While the process of development is helpful, the theological implications of a missional praxis formed by eucharistic liturgical praxis diverges greatly from present

discussions of missional church development, liturgical theology, and the relationship of the two. The clarification of eucharistic liturgy as the primal formation and initiation to missional praxis inherently changes the approach to missional praxis for congregations of the "liturgical" or "sacramental" traditions.

In discussing the development of missional praxes from theological foundations, most attention is paid to the impact of deconstructing insular and hierarchical organizational structures, programmatic expressions, and ecclesiological traditions as the means to develop missional praxis.[197] In this stream of discussion, the very nature of praxis for congregations of the liturgical and sacramental tradition is cast aside and misunderstood. Within these discussions the liturgical practice of congregations falls within programmatic expressions. Taken in this direction of development, liturgy is not formative of missional praxis, but formed by missional praxis. Ruth Meyers states plainly, "Such missional liturgy can only take place in a missional community, a congregation in which God's mission permeates every aspect of its life."[198] Within this regard, liturgy acts as a ceremonial and cultic expression of missional praxis.

Bearing in mind the definition of missional praxis recorded in the Introduction, missional praxis depends on the congregation undergoing some experience of God's action; recall Guder's phrase, "Mission is the result of God's initiative."[199] As Chapter 3 illustrated, the eucharistic liturgy provides a constant and regular experience of God's initiative. It is in the practice of eucharist liturgy that we hear "God's mission continued

[197] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 147.

[198] Ruth Meyers, "Missional Church, Missional Liturgy," *Theology Today*, Volume 67 (2010): 50.

[199] Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church*, 4.

in the sending of the Spirit to call and empower the church as the witness to God's good news in Jesus Christ."[200] Therefore, liturgical practice does not result from missional praxis, but is the very means for the development and expression of praxis. As Paul Avis states, "The celebration of the sacraments is not the private ritual of the in-group. It is not the Church talking to itself. It is a primary act of witness."[201] As evidenced in the incorporation, participation, and empowering of the assembly through eucharistic praxis, we find that the eucharistic liturgy is not subsequently, but inherently "missional," as it provides the primal locus to experience God and God's action.

By connecting this missional inherency of eucharistic praxis, we now find a more definitive understanding of the *telos*, or purposeful ends, which emerges from this *theologia prima* for the Church. Eucharistic liturgical practice does more than just give us the first means and ways to express and experience God and our lives in response. The expression and experience are inherently focused upon mission and the cultivation of a new *habitus* as the people are incorporated into, participant with, and sent forth by God. This is the purpose for which Paul chastised the Corinthian congregation to recall and reclaim with his use of παιδεύω in describing the effects of eucharistic participation. As Alexander Schmemann states, "For eucharist is the very form and content of the new life that God granted us when in Christ He reconciled us with Himself."[202] In liturgical practice we are drawn into sacred remembrance, and sent forth as a transformed communion with different ways and notions. Eucharistic liturgical praxis as the primal

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[200] *Ibid.*

[201] Paul Avis, *The Mission Shaped Church*, 28.

[202] Alexander Schmemann, *For the Joy of the World*, 39.

formation and initiation of mission leads to more than transformed ideas or hopes, but changed behavior and actions. With the development of *habitus* in the eucharistic liturgical framework of communion with God and God's mission, eucharistic liturgical practice leads to missional praxis.

This work provides theological significance for more than the niche concern for liturgical and sacramental congregations for two reasons. Recall the opening phrase of Darrell Gruber's definition of mission, "Mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation."[203] For mission to derive from God's initiative, how do we come to know and experience God's initiative? While some in the church may not assume the primacy of liturgical expression for this, leaders and congregations need to define such in their own terms and tradition. To develop and nurture missional praxis, not just programs, leaders and congregations need to find the means to transform *habitus* that is consist with the interactions with God's initiative within their own tradition.

Second, while not all congregations center their common life in the eucharist, the eucharist is a common action across denominations as commanded by Christ for observance. As the World Council of Churches states, "It has acquired many names: for example, the Lord's Supper, the breaking of bread, the holy communion, the divine liturgy, the mass. Its celebration continues as the central act of the Church's worship."[204] Any congregation seeking to share the Lord's Supper or eucharist within their context should consider not only the forms used, but the formative intent of the eucharist.

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[203] Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church*, 4.

[204] World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist And Ministry*, 16.

Opportunities could be made for the further development of missional praxis in those settings, regardless of identification with the liturgical and sacramental traditions of the church.

## Goals

Considering these theological implications, this project will provide the framework for the development of missional praxis by congregations based in the eucharistic liturgical practices of the congregation and community, beginning with a clear understanding of the formative role of eucharistic liturgy and the essential missional quality of eucharistic liturgy. Critical to the process of missional praxis development is to remedy the misperceptions of eucharistic liturgical praxis. As Schmemann describes the visceral and essential qualities of the eucharist, he states "To eat is something more than to maintain bodily functions. People may not understand what that 'something more' is, but they nonetheless desire to celebrate it. They are still hungry and thirsty for sacramental life."[205] Similar to the misconceptions of the eucharistic practice of the Corinthian community resulting from cultural disconnection, contemporary congregations need the assistance of liturgical exegesis to appreciate the inherent and undeclared realities of the eucharist.

While developing appreciation and comprehensions of the theological and formative realities of eucharstic practice, the eucharist also develops the Church as a clear community of practice. The multidisciplined and diverse assembly does not gather to occupy common space, but to be joined and united in the work of God as the Body of

[205] *Ibid.*, 16.

Christ. As Zizioulas states, "What, therefore, the Spirit does through the ministry is to constitute the Body of Christ *here and now* by *realizing* Christ's ministry *as* the Church's ministry."[206] The Pauline notions of the Church as Christological corporeality as articulated in the Roman or Corinthian epistles describes theologically Wenger's community of practice.

For the missional praxis to be truly effective within the specific context of the congregation requires the development of local, vernacular, and indigenous expression of eucharistic liturgical praxis. For the experience of God's mission through, and from, eucharistic practice requires not just the rote repetition of cultic and ceremonial movements. To allow eucharistic practice to fall into this mentality ignores the call of intentionality that Scripture holds for worship and life with God, as highlighted by the prophet Isaiah:

> Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. (Isaiah 58:6-9)[207]

For the inherent missional quality of eucharistic practice to be intelligible, the incarnational reality must seek a vernacular and indigenous expression. Within the Anglican theological tradition, this has remained a hallmark of liturgical practice, as

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[206] John Zizioulas, *Being Communion*, 209.

[207] The text for the Hebrew Scriptures for the observance of Ash Wednesday is Isaiah 58:1-12.

evidenced in *A New Zealand Prayer Book: He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*[208], which provides a striking example of vernacular and indigenous liturgical expression. The book does not simply provide the translations of words of the liturgical texts in English and Maori, the languages of New Zealand, for a bilingual edition. The *He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* intermingles vernacular expressions, as well as articulating the liturgical-theological content in Maori culturally resonant means.

Congregations and their respective leaders need to bear the intentionality to the development of indigenous expressions of eucharistic liturgy for missional praxis to emerge in their specific setting. As Reggie McNeal states in *Missional Renaissance*, "Incarnational believers search for ways to connect not just with each other but to the world beyond the church. They look for ways to help discover and live out their faith in the spaces they already occupy."[209] The indigenous or vernacular expression of eucharistic liturgical practice affords for an authentic expression of the incarnational reality of missional praxis. Gordon Lathrop expresses this relationship of culture, liturgy and mission:

> The mission of the church, then, is not to supplant cultures, not to "lord it over" cultures, not to create its own culture. The mission is rather to be the holy assembly in each place, the focused, open assembly in communion with all the other assemblies, and to set out the life-giving Word in the midst of each culture, in loving and critical dialogue with that culture, with our culture.[210]

As he writes to the Corinthians, Paul extols the same quality to be understood in his

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[208] The Anglican Church of New Zealand, *A New Zealand Prayer Book: He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* (Hastings, New Zealand: HarperOne; 4th Printing edition,1997).

[209] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 50.

[210] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy People,* Location 2890.

ministry: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Retaining, and nurturing, the incarnational quality of the Church is essential to the missional praxis.

The final two goals of this project focus on the development of missional praxis through lay leadership in the congregation. Building on the aforementioned goals, the project will equip lay leaders as a community of practice for the shared design of eucharistic liturgical action. Recalling Paul Avis' definition of the mission of the Church (“Mission is the whole Church bringing the whole Christ to the whole world.”), the development of missional praxis requires the breadth of the congregation beyond the clergy. The development of lay leadership also nurtures the necessary shift for missional praxis identified by Reggie McNeal: “Absent a real commitment to actually helping people grow, the ramp-up of services will not fully convey the heart of God to people who need to experience it.”[211]

To cultivate lay leadership as we develop a eucharistically derived missional praxis also counters the historical shortcomings of the liturgical and sacramental traditions of the Church. These shortcomings were noted in the review of Weil's and Zizioulas' works. However, the development of lay leadership is not just a logistical issue, or a matter of balancing practice set askew by history, but cultivating relationship with God. As Lathrop illustrates,

[211] *Ibid.*, Location 90.

> This assembly, constituted by God's holy voice going out to the nations, discovers that the central content of that voice is the word of God's mercy to the ungodly in Christ....And they understand the astonishing intimacy with God, God's powerful *election* of this people, to be an election not to go away with God but to practice this assembly in each place and bear witness and act in loving service in the world.[212]

To fully express the aforementioned goals related to the qualities of eucharistic liturgical practice as missional and requiring indigenous or vernacular expression, the Project will share the work of formation and training with the same indigenous intent.

**Content**

The content of this Project will be a formation program with eight session modules. Key resources have been identified to supplement the work of the whole program, as well as the specific content objectives. The description of the content objectives and respective resources for the program follows. Each two-hour session of the program will share a regular rhythm and expected external work. Beginning with prayer, participants will offer reflection upon previous activities. Following a time of reflection, a dedicated learning didactic will engage the participants with the first session focused on the formative realities of liturgical practice. The next five sessions are focused on the specific points of experience within the eucharistic rite (Gathering, Hearing God, Responding to God, the Offering-Blessing-Breaking-Sharing of the Table, the Blessing and Dismissal). The didactic portions of the final two sessions will focus on identifying the skills of the development of communities of practice and indigenous cultural analysis. Following the didactic, the participants will share in small-group reflections and planning related to the out-of-session work. The sessions will finish with prayers. In review, the

[212] *Ibid.*, Location 2662.

titles and focus of the eight sessions were:

- "Session 1: Context, Context, Context" will consider the application for general theological reflection of the Anglican theological tradition of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, the formative nature of liturgical practice, and the definition of God's mission for the Church.
- "Session 2: Gathering with the Holy" reflects upon the gathering rite of the eucharist, focusing on the theological importance of assemblage with the focus upon God's presence and invitation to communion.
- "Session 3: Encountering God" reviews the sharing of scripture and preached word as recounting God's previous action and acknowledges God's current presence and action.
- "Session 4: From Affirmation into Action" moves to the communal response of creed and intercession made to God by virtue of the recognition of God's initial action on our behalf. The session will also begin the discussion of our liturgical practice as missional praxis on a spiritually microeconomic scale.
- "Session 5: Reconciliation and Peace" rounds out the discussion of the confession and exchange of the peace as the assembly's continued response to God's action. The actions of confession and reconciliation afford further missional praxis.
- "Session 6: Offering and Blessing" examines the first two actions of the eucharistic table in offertory and *epiclesis*. With these actions, we receive the formation of our gifts turned forth for God's purposes.
- "Session 7: Broken and Shared" reflects upon the fraction of the bread and distribution of the elements as a primer for our understanding of the results which come forth from ourselves in the eucharist. We too are opened to the sending and sharing from God.
- "Session 8: Everything's Different Now" completes the sessions with the discussion of the practical applications of missional praxis.

The theological movement of the sessions carries participants through the multivalent experience of the focus of this project – the experience of God's action (in the eucharistic assembly) gives rise to the missional praxis of the Church. The participants undergo successive loops of formation with increasing spheres of formation and action of praxis. We are moved into ever-expanding relationships and spheres of action, beginning with the personal, interior, and spiritual to the smaller context of our

household, then congregation, then neighborhood, etc. Within this understanding, the participants will see the real connection of liturgical practice with the praxis of the Church. Visually this movement and process could be understood in the adaptation of the mathematical representation of an infinity loop, as seen in Figure 1.

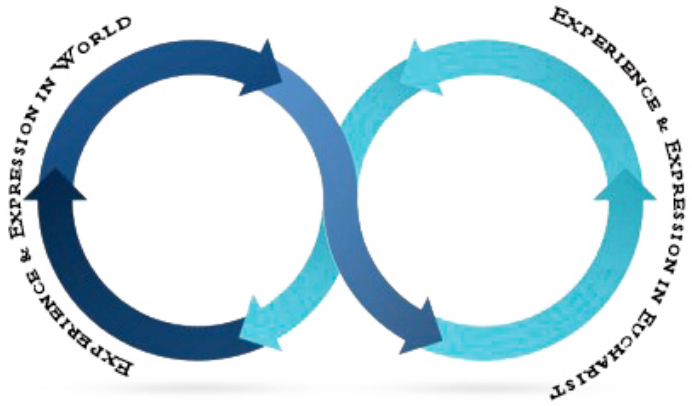


*Figure 1. Visualization of interaction between experiences of liturgical practice and personal habitus*

The regular return of the loop also bears out in the cycle of liturgical practice. The experience of a single eucharistic gathering is repeated week after week, and the same cycle of recognition of God, response to God, and empowerment for participation becomes a part of the design of the liturgical year.

During the program, the participants will receive knowledge regarding eucharistic liturgy theology and missional praxis. Essential resources to this theological work will be chapters related to eucharistic liturgical practice from *Praying Shapes Believing*, by Leonel L. Mitchell. Mitchell's work provides a thorough theological exegesis of the eucharistic rites of the Episcopal Church. This portion of the program will comprise the bulk of the didactic work of sessions two through six.

Through the eight sessions, the participants will develop new and indigenous

knowledge through an Action-Reflection learning model[213] that combines small-team activities, out-of-session interactions, and large group reflection. Ian Markham's text, *Liturgical Life: How Episcopal Worship Can Lead to Healthy and Authentic Living*, will provide not only theological exegesis of the eucharistic liturgical practice, but also gives poignant questions of theological and spiritual reflection for each of the major points of the eucharistic rite. Through the theological discussions, the liturgical experiences, and the action-reflection work, the eight sessions will cultivate the participants into an intentional community of practice for development. This content objective will inform the reflection portion that initiates each session as well as the small-group discussions during sessions one through six.

As the community of practice develops, the participants will enter into the discussion and development of indigenous liturgical expression and the relationship this bears for missional praxis. Essential for this work will be *Time and Seasons: Creating Transformative Worship throughout the Year* by Richard Giles. Giles' text provides visual and accessible descriptions not only of further liturgical exegesis, but also examples of liturgical expression throughout the liturgical year in eucharistic practice to unite the experience of the liturgical assembly with the intent of the rite and liturgical

[213] Action Reflection Learning Model: A learning model that combines action and reflection. There is a clear link between action, reflection and change within this style of learning. In the activity-reflection model there are four stages to the cycle of reflection: 1. The initial or new experience; 2. Reflection and observation; 3. Development of a new concept; 4. Experimentation. While being involved in various kinds of activities, this tool involves intentionally reflecting on the usefulness of the activities we have just been involved in, and making adaptations accordingly. As learners we are constantly constructing, revising, and reconstructing our knowledge and beliefs to create a new framework of understanding. Reflection is the engine that drives this process. Through reflection students build upon and develop existing understandings to generate new knowledge. Technology Assistance Program, "Action+Reflection=Learning" in *Tap Into Learning* (Austin: Southeastern Educational), Volume 3, Issue 2 (Winter 2000), 1-2.

season. As the participants discuss and turn to the development of indigenous expressions during sessions seven and eight, specific liturgical expressions and indigenous practices will emerge from assignments completed outside of sessions.

## Leadership and Target Population

The formation program will gather a diverse group of individuals. Focusing on the formation of lay leaders involved in the development of liturgical events for the congregation, the program will focus on the Diverse Worship Team of Reconciliation. In addition, lay individuals involved in liturgical ministries will be targeted. For Church of Reconciliation, these ministries include, though not exclusively, lay readers, intercessors, choir members, eucharistic ministers, healing prayer teams, acolytes, vergers, ushers, and technology stewards. These individuals will participate in the eight sessions of this leadership development while led by the author.

A target participation of ten individuals is set for the pilot program. With consideration to learning group dynamics, the ideal size of a group that will utilize the action-reflection learning model ranges from eight to ten participants.[214] In addition, an intentionally small-sized group facilitates the development of a community of practice. Small groups for community of practice maintain an intimacy and relational connectedness. In addition, large groups that make up a community require an internal segmentation and structure to facilitate the work.[215]

The target population of the development program will be individuals identified

[214] *Ibid*.,, 4.

[215] Etienne Wenger, Richard A. McDermott, and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice,* 24.

by Vestry and Rector of the congregation. As the Vestry and clergy comprise the corporate decision-making and strategic direction of the congregation, the congregational leadership must maintain a commitment for any development of missional praxis to represent more than programmatic tinkering for the congregation. In addition, the Canons of the Episcopal Church stipulate that the Rector of the congregation is ultimately responsible: "The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall have full authority and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish, subject to the rubrics of *The Book of Common Prayer*, the Constitution and Canons of this Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop."[216] Therefore the Rector must review any activity considered part of liturgical reformulation.

[216] The Episcopal Church, "Canon III.9.5.a.1" in *The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church* (New York: The Episcopal Church, 2012), 89.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION

Chapter 5 will describe the project development and implementation process for the training and deployment of a pilot group of lay leaders for liturgical design and expression which manifests the missional formative realities of eucharistic liturgy. The chapter will outline the project, including an overall project timeline, process for identification and development of group participants, and necessary project resources (physical, financial, literary, and personnel). Chapter 5 will present assessment and refining analysis of the project in light of evaluative conversations and a questionnaire.

## Pilot Project Summary

The implementation of the pilot project included three key areas as the means to develop a missional praxis and ecclesiology through eucharistic liturgical practice: participant selection, session development, and community of practice development. First, deliberate attention was given to the process of participant selection. While participation was made open to the congregation, specific participation was sought from those involved in overall congregational leadership and liturgical leadership. The project included the preparatory work and delivery of eight training sessions. The eight sessions

included the delivery of theological resources to participants illustrating the formative realities of eucharistic practice, the inherent missional nature expressed in eucharistic practice, and therefore the cultivation of missional praxis. Through the use of the action-reflection learning model in the eight sessions and development of communion through eucharistic practice, the participants should have seen explicitly the development of a community of practice. This community of practice, formed by eucharistic practice for mission, should represent a new expression of missional ecclesiology.

## Timeline

The development, implementation, and evaluation of the pilot project required twelve months, beginning with two months of dedicated theological research. This research drew on research of key Anglican theological resources, Liturgical Theology resources, phenomenological resources, and organizational development resources regarding communities of practice. As the *via media* of the Anglican theological tradition shares much with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions when considering matters of liturgical practice, resources in the area of Liturgical Theology drew from ecumenical sources.

Following the theological research, two months were given to the development of project resources. The resources included leader materials, participant materials, participant resources, participant activities and assignments, and specific liturgical materials for the project. In addition, surveys were prepared for participant usage before and after the eight sessions. These surveys assisted in comparison of knowledge growth, development of theological comprehension, and initiation of new missional praxis. Leader materials comprised presentation notes and all participant materials. Participants'

resources included a participant guide for each of the eight sessions with respective notes, reflection questions, and assignments. The liturgical resources provided comparison of the varying eucharistic rites, examples of indigenous liturgical expression, and further resources for the future use of participants.

Over the fifth month, attention was given to the recruitment of leaders and logistical coordination for the overall project. The invitation for participation was open within the congregation. Through consultation with the congregation clergy, participants were recruited from among individuals involved in congregational missional change and liturgical leadership roles. Passive recruitment was conducted via verbal public announcements at congregational gatherings, written announcements, the congregation newsletter, and electronic announcements. The author conducted active recruitment through personal contact and invitation.

It was during the recruitment phase that the process of development for the community of practice becomes explicit. The recruitment of leaders represented the "Potential Period" as described by Wenger.[217] In this Potential Period, the prospective participants discovered or imagined the intent and domain of the areas of attention. As Wenger describes, the key for community of practice development at this stage is: connecting the key domain issue with heartfelt interests of members, finding individuals who will key relational networking abilities in the area of intent, and articulating the key practice issue for which the common knowledge of the members is needed.[218]

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[217] Etienne Wenger, Richard A. McDermott, and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice,* Location 69.

[218] *Ibid.,* Location 71.

The pilot project launched with the first session in the middle of September 2013. The course of the pilot group covered two months, finishing in November 2013. The course of the pilot program occurred without interruption or deviation from the schedule and project plan.

Following the pilot project execution, evaluation, analysis, and future ministry projections were conducted over two months. These actions carried into January 2014. The evaluation compared participant surveys conducted before and after the eight sessions. Review of the program was conducted by interview with the clergy of the congregation. Additional evaluation included the recording of intentional indigenous expressions within the congregation's liturgical practices as well as demonstrated missional actions related to liturgical practices. The project materials were reviewed and revised for future application in other congregational settings.

**Leadership Development of Pilot Group of Missional Lay Liturgists**

The pilot project included a total of twenty-one participants, representing ten percent of the congregation’s average Sunday attendance and readily active membership. Of the twenty-one participants, twelve were actively recruited following identification by the clergy of the congregation. The remaining nine participants accepted the open invitation for participation. Of the twenty-one participants, fifteen were actively involved in some form of liturgical leadership. Two participants serve as vergers. Nine participants serve as lay readers. Three participants sang in the choir. Three participants serve as ushers. Two participants share in the technology ministry and media preparations for the congregation's liturgical gatherings. Five of the six members of the Diverse Worship Team participated. The participants represented an age range of twenty-four to seventy-

five years. The participants' professional backgrounds included teachers, artists, an accountant, a substance abuse counselor, retirees, professional musicians, and administrative professionals and managers. In addition, the active and retired clergy of the congregation participated. The participants embodied a diversity ideal for the development of a community of practice.[219]

The pilot project utilized the training sessions developed by the author. Due to the number of participants, the pilot project split into two separate training groups. A uniform agenda was used for each training session: gathering with prayer, reflection, didactic, dialogue, action, sending with prayer. Participants had a ninety percent rate of attendance.

The pilot group responsibilities for the project included various activities, including preparatory reading, personal reflection and response, and group activities. Participants read in preparation for the project the chapter "Holy Eucharist" from Mitchell's *Praying Shapes Believing,* providing a theological exegesis for the eucharist rite. As noted in the previous chapter, portions of Markham's and Giles' texts were used to provide primer and imagination to reflection and activities in the action-reflection of the project.

The fundamental development of the community practice was developed through the action-reflection work of participants. Each week afforded reflection upon the learnings and actions of eucharistic practice shared by the congregation. The action-reflection of the participants culminated in their development of a personal liturgical interpretation project. This project invited participants to imagine an experience that

[219] *Ibid.,* Location 35.

articulated the theological intent and inherent missionality of a specific action in the eucharistic rite.

## Resources

The pilot project required various resources for implementation, beginning with consideration of physical space and congregation facilities. Two primary spaces were needed for the pilot project, a room that could comfortably accommodate ten adults with seats and writing tables, and the primary worship space of the congregation. These spaces were reserved through the congregation's administrative staff. The first three portions of each session occurred in the teaching space. The worship space provided for instructive and practical liturgical dialogue with participants, as well as discussion as a community practice in development.

Beyond the physical space, the pilot project required additional resources with budgetary impact. To facilitate the participation of interested individuals with children, the congregation's regular professional childcare workers were scheduled for these additional duties. As a means to support community development, refreshments were purchased to provide hospitality as well fellowship. Additional supplies were needed to ensure printed materials for each participant. Finally, a modest amount of additional liturgical implements and supplies (chalice, paten, linens, bread, and wine) were needed as to not use resources already committed for the congregation's regular eucharistic gatherings. Items such as bread, wine, and altar vestments were used.

The pilot project utilized instructional materials, including print and electronic items. The printed materials for the project include preparatory readings, weekly modules and assignments. The project also utilized multimedia LCD projection and screen for the

presentation of didactic materials. Materials, illustrative of diverse liturgical expressions or contemporary reflection upon liturgical practices was also utilized. Participants were invited to continue dialogue and reflection when not gathered. These interactions outside of group gatherings were done via email and social media.

The identifiable final resources include specific support personnel from the congregation. Administrative staff supported the pilot project initially by facilitating contact with potential participants. Administrative staff also assisted in the reproduction of printed materials. Facility staff of the congregation assisted in the set-up and preparation of the physical spaces utilized. These staff members were also essential in the opening of spaces, as well as securing spaces after usage.

## Assessment Plan

Evaluation of the pilot program includes three parts, beginning with surveys completed by participants before the program began, as well as a survey at completion. Conducted by email, the preparatory survey provided a baseline for understanding three key areas: the comprehension by participants of the Theology of the Eucharist and liturgical practices; the comprehension of missional praxis; and the perceived relationship by participants of eucharistic practice and the development of missional praxis. The survey consisted of the following six closed-ended questions[220]:

1 On a scale of one (lowest) to five (highest), rate your understanding of our liturgical practice of the eucharist.

2 On a scale of one (lowest) to five (highest), rate your understanding of the meaning of being a "missional church."

[220] Scott Thumma, "Methods for Congregational Study" in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, edited by Nanncy Ammerman, Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley, and William McKinney (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 220.

3 What best describes the nature of being a "missional church" for Church of Reconciliation? Options: Attraction of New Members; Renewed Outreach Programs; a Different Way of Being Church; Newly Assigned Programs from Clergy or Diocese.

4 For the development and deepening of Church of Reconciliation as a missional church, of the following options, what provides the most significant influence? Options: Sunday School and Education; Ministry Programs; Liturgy and Worship; Fellowship; Congregation Clergy and Lay Leadership.

5 For the development and deepening of Church of Reconciliation as a missional church, of the following options, what requires the greatest change to facilitate being a missional church? Options: Sunday School and Education; Ministry Programs; Liturgy and Worship; Fellowship; Congregation Clergy and Lay Leadership.

6 What activity of Church of Reconciliation is the most significant to your spiritual life and experience of God's activity in our world? Options: Sunday School and Education; Ministry Programs; Liturgy and Worship; Fellowship; Congregation Clergy and Lay Leadership.

The exit survey for the pilot program consisted of these same questions with additional evaluation of the author's performance as instructor and facilitator.

The survey conducted before the project provided clear support of the author's hypothesis. Regarding the personal ranking of comprehension of eucharistic liturgical knowledge, the majority (nineteen of twenty-one) stated a ranking of three or less. Regarding the personal ranking of missional comprehension four of twenty-one stated a high knowledge (ranking of four or five), three participants stated a middle ranking (three), and the remaining participants stated knowledge ranking two or less (fourteen participants). In reflecting upon the perceived congregational influences upon missional church development the following descending order emerged from the survey: Ministry Programs - twelve participants; Congregation Clergy and Lay Leadership – four participants; Fellowship – two participants; Education – two participants; Liturgy – one

participant. In reflecting upon the perceived congregational areas in need of change for missional church development the following descending order was offered: Liturgy – twelve participants; Education – four participants; Programs – three participants; Fellowship – one participant; Leadership – one participant. Responses regarding the congregational area with the greatest influence on the participants' spiritual journey, sixteen participants stated their experience of liturgy, four participants stated the congregational fellowship, and one participant stated leadership.

These results indicate a clear perceived influence of liturgy upon participants' own spiritual development, as indicated in the responses to entrance survey question six. However, the liturgical practices are not connected to the development of missional praxis as indicated in responses to questions four and five. In addition, the survey showed a lack of comprehension of liturgical theology and missional church concepts. The survey indicates a clear conceptualization of missional praxis in the Church associated as a programmatic function.

Following completion of the pilot program, participants completed the exit survey, indicating encouraging results. The exit survey indicated the pilot program increased understanding of liturgical practice as nineteen participants indicated a high understanding with responses of four or five to question one. Participation also increased understanding of the shape and meaning of missional church, indicated by eighteen responses of four or five to question two. Participants' responses to question three indicated a move in understanding missional praxis as deeper than programmatic functions of the Church, but a more internalized expression of *missio Dei* as sixteen associated missional church as a "a different way of being Church" and away from the

programmatic or church-growth responses offered. Following participation, responses identified a clear influence between the liturgical practices of the congregation and missional praxis. In responses to question four, fifteen participants indicated liturgy as the influence upon missional praxis. Perceptions of the need to alter or change liturgy increased following participation as eighteen participants indicated the need for change in this area to facilitate missional praxis.

Beyond the encouraging results indicated in participant surveys, the greatest integration of the pilot project manifested in new missional praxis in the congregation. At initial work, missional activities explicitly connected to the liturgical practices of the congregation. For example, the congregation took into consideration the intercessory prayers offered during the eucharist. Inspired by the prayers offered for those with illness or anticipated death, the congregation incorporated the skills of congregants for knitting to provide shawls and blankets to be shared with these individuals in need of comfort. The shawls knit by the Shawl Ministry were made a part of the liturgical context and intercessory prayers of the congregation during the eucharist (see Figure 2). These shawls became a part of the liturgical space, as well as provided a tangible connection to the intercessory prayers offered.

*Figure 2. Resultant missional practices of Shawl Ministry within the liturgical space*

Noteworthy among the resultant efforts, is the establishment of the Abode Hospice Agency. The agency was started as to be an interfaith organization to provide a home for people in need near the end of life.[221] The establishment came by inspiration to the lay pastoral caregivers of the congregation from the power of the intercessory prayers within the eucharistic liturgical practice of Reconciliation. As the agency states in their vision statement, "Dying is a sacred time of life. Love, compassion, and a home matter to all who are dying; those whom we honor and from whom we learn. We serve the community as an educational resource in the art of contemplative living and dying."[222] The agency purchased and refurbished a large residence in the neighborhood near Reconciliation. At the facility, professional hospice palliative care is provided to those lacking the resources for private end-of-life care. The agency offers spiritual and contemplative practices to assist the dying and their families.[223]

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[221] Abode Hospice Agency, "Our Vision" on *Guiding Traditions,* http://www.abodehome.org/guiding-traditions (accessed December 1, 2014).

[222] *Ibid.*

[223] Abe Levy, "Here a Medical Event Is a Spiritual Process," *San Antonio Express News*, September 7, 2014. K10.

The implementation of the pilot project followed the design and planning of the author. The program reached representative samples of the active congregation. Participants noted an increased comprehension of the theology of the Eucharist and missional praxis. Of greatest importance was the discovery of the locus for their missional praxis within the experience of the eucharistic liturgy. The congregation has begun to internalize the experience of the *missio Dei* leading to not only deeper significance to current expressions of missional praxis but the development of even newer expressions.

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A recent internet search through on the query "missional church" resulted in no less than 602,000 possibilities. The Library of Congress has over 170 titles related to "missional church." A great deal has been, and is being written and offered about the missional church movement and development of congregations. The groundswell of interest in the missional church development could be expressed by author Alan Hirsch: "My own sense of calling is to somehow call the church to recover her original – and originative – apostolic ways and to become a high-impact Jesus movement in the West."[224] However the task of assisting congregations in being "missional" raises the concern expressed by Van Gelder and Zscheile, "What does the missional church look like in practice?"[225] However, the creation of new programmatic expressions does not take the Church to the heart of transformation that makes missional expressions or practices into *habitus* and praxis. Additionally, the organizational or programmatic adaptation does not afford for a truly transformative change when considering congregations of the liturgical and sacramental tradition, such as Episcopal congregations. For these congregations to find authentic means of missional praxis, the notions and sourcing of the missional nature of the Church must go deeper than adopting programs or ministry examples from other denominational traditions. The essential work of this project has been to give liturgical and sacramental congregations the means to find their authentic missional praxis, thereby making the real type of shift Alan Hirsch hopes

[224] Alan Hirsch and David Ferguson, *On the Verge: A Journey into the Apostolic Future of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 18.

[225] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Context*, 147.

for the church.

If the missional praxis of the Church is rooted in the primary expression and activity of God, then the origin of missional praxis must be our primary experience of God's action, intention, and invitation to the Church. For congregations in the Episcopal Church, such as Church of Reconciliation in San Antonio, Texas, the primary means to experience and express our knowledge and faith is in the eucharistic liturgical practice of their tradition. Therefore in this context, the development of missional praxis is found within the experience of God's initiative of the eucharist.

This project designed and initiated a pilot program that gathered leaders to connect the formative realities of eucharistic liturgical practice as the source for the development of new missional praxis as a congregation. The program's content afforded not only the information and intellectual understanding of the concepts, but also developed the participants into an example of a dedicated community of practice.

The project offered an eight-week training of lay leaders to become initiators of missional praxis in their congregation. The work of participants included regular reflection, didactic learning regarding liturgical theology and mission, action-reflection learning into the participation and preparation of the eucharistic liturgy, and the development as a community of practice. From these experiences, participants recounted new understandings of eucharistic liturgical practice and missional praxis. Further, the target congregation discovered and developed expressions of a new missional praxis rooted in their eucharistic practice.

This work was informed by various sources that cross disciplines. These sources were reviewed with attention to the manner that they would contribute to the project, as

well as shortcomings. While theological resources of Louis Weil, Paul Avis, and Dwight Zscheile did draw from work done from the Anglican theological tradition, the project drew from Eastern Orthodox theology, in the work of John Zizioulas, and Lutheran theology, in the work of Gordon Lathrop. Sources were not limited to theological discussions, but included the phenomenological research of James K.A. Smith and organizational theory of Etienne Wenger.

Cross-disciplinary sources were used for two reasons. First, the theological breadth allowed the project to speak from the theological depth of the eucharist, rather than banter about external trappings or matters of style or aesthetic taste. As Weil chides, "This is an important reminder that our concern here is not ritual trivia, but rather the inner substance and meaning of what the rites signify."[226] Much discussion of liturgical practice focuses upon trappings or musical selections as the matters in need of change for missional practices to arise. However, it is in understanding what is really at work by God in the eucharist, and the corollary expectation of response, that is significant to the development of missional praxis.

Second, the wisdom offered by Smith and Wenger demonstrated practical realities of eucharistic liturgical practice and missional praxis. Insights from these works provided for the project to be more than a spiritualized matter of individual transformation. Smith provided the key understanding of the phenomenology of liturgical formation. Wenger provided a description of the development of communities of practice. These resources demonstrated the practical expression of the theological aspects of the eucharist, namely

[226] Louis Weil, *Liturgical Sense*, Location 875.

the incorporation of the assembly into communion with God, the participation of the assembly in Christ's redemption and grace, and the activation in the Holy Spirit within the assembly.

The formative realities of eucharistic liturgical practice draw the assembly into new *habitus*, actions based upon internalized character and values. As the eucharist becomes the means to experience the *missio Dei* of God, we experience the desire and direction of God for expression going forth from God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to God's people. This experience transforms our habitus to become a part of this God-originated movement. As Dwight Zscheile expresses in *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity*,

> We are joined through the Spirit with God in Christ. There is a new belonging that we know concretely through baptism and the Eucharist— a belonging to God and others. Through them, God embraces us, acts in us, and sends us into the world.[227]

The formation is not limited to individuals of the congregation but upon the whole community. In the eucharist, the congregation is joined together in common life and action, equivalent to communities of practice within secular business and organizational development.

Scripture provides clear understanding of the formative reality eucharistic practice brings to missional praxis. As seen in the earliest articulations regarding eucharistic practice, the Pauline admonishment of 1 Corinthians 11, the church is given a clear expectation within Scripture for the eucharistic observance to be transformative to the actions and identities of the church. As Paul calls for the reexamination of the church's

[227] Dwight Zscheile, *People of the Way*, Location 1059.

gatherings, Paul states, "Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves" (1 Corinthians 11:28-29). As Paul uses the term παιδεύω in the following verse, he invokes a clear connection of eucharistic participation with the intentional shaping and formation expected for the development of citizens in the Greek *polis*.

The Lukan account of Christ's mandate for observance of the Lord's Supper delivers direct demonstration for the participation of the eucharistic congregation in the presence and work of God. Noting the use of ανάμνησις in Christ's declaration, "do this in remembrance of me,"[228] we are to understand our eucharistic participation in more significant ways than ceremonial reenactment of a historical moment. The invocation of ανάμνησις ties the eucharistic actions with the sacred remembering of Hebrew observance, *zakhor*. In this remembrance, the congregation joins again and always in the events of God's deliverance and salvation. As John Zizioulas states,

> The implications of this include the following: the ministry of the Church does not represent an "interim period in the stages of *Heilsgeschichte*, but exists as an expression of the *totality* of the Economy. We cannot, therefore, understand the nature of the ministry by seeing it simply in terms of a *past* (Christ's ministry in Palestine) or a *present* (ministry in service to the needs of today), but of the *future* as well, namely as sustaining for creation the hope of the *eschata*, of sharing God's very life, by offering a taste of that here and now.[229]

To share in eucharistic liturgical practice, we are carried deeper into communion with God and farther into the world on mission.

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[228] Luke 22:19-20.

[229] John Zizioulas, *Being Communion*, 211.

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